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The idea of the church

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

ASPECTS, FORMS, ACTIVITIES

BY JOHN A. KERN

Professor of Practical Theology in Vanderbilt University

"The actual is precious because it carries in
its heart ideal meanings."

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TO
MY STUDENTS
OF THE PRESENT AND OF THE PAST
IN
CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

“When the man arises with a servant's heart and a ruler's brain, then is the summer of the Church's content.”

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PREFACE

To represent a study of the Church in a little book of three or four hundred pages may seem a presumptuous effort. For the subject is practically limitless. But of what subject into which one may think, indeed, may not the same thing be said?

There are those who covet a knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ, in both its outer forms and its inner idea. They would see with some truer vision this celestial City, "the Jerusalem that is above" and yet crudely visible on earth, as it was designed to be, as it is, and as it shall be. The present sketch is an expression of such a desire. The Church, actual and ideal, in its most significant features, is what it would invite the reader to contemplate. Nothing more is attempted. But even so, a measure of time and attention such as this outline study shall demand may be worth while.

The theological thought of our time is busy about many questions, which concern either the emphasis or the essence of Christian doctrine. As to results, it repeats the world-old story of mingled success and failure. Among other things, it has placed an unwonted emphasis upon the truth that the one all-inclusive purpose of the Church is

to make the kingdom of heaven a universal reality on earth. But if this witness is true, then the knowledge of the Church is the knowledge of that Divine institution through which distinctively, as a human society, the paramount purpose of the ages is to be wrought out. An inquiry into such a subject can hardly be rated, as to interest and value, lower than the highest.

It is here compressed within as small an amount of text as seemed practicable. In the footnotes, which have also been prepared with exceeding jealousy of space, it is hoped that a fair selection of illustrative matter, and such references to authorities as are likely to be called for, will be found.

INTRODUCTORY

THAT which is familiar is not necessarily, nor even usually, well known. It is likely to be regarded as a matter of course, exciting none of that "wonder" which, in wise Lord Bacon's phrase, is "the seed of knowledge." Yet there is nothing that needs to be pondered more intently than the commonplace. Of measureless unappreciated worth is many an object which lies open, in its external features, before everybody's eyes from morning to evening and from day to day.

Such an object may be a Divine institution, powerfully affecting one's own life and happiness, and of immense world-wide significance. It may be the Church of God.

Certainly to persons who have grown up in a Christian home and community, the Church is a very familiar fact. Its signs appear and its influences are felt, with more or less distinctness, continually. In childhood it is taken, like parental providence, or sunshine, or air to breathe, as a part of the constitution of things that could not have been otherwise. It is much spoken of, sometimes critically, but for the most part sympathetically. Sweeter than life in not a few instances are the associations to which it gives rise. When complained of or resisted, still it may exert

upon the spirit an indefinable compelling power. Its members are asked to do many things in its service. Its ministers, relieved from the embarrassment of all other employments, devote their lives to the promotion of the interests for which it stands.

Now these things do not imply that the Church, in its essential idea, must needs be clearly thought out or defined even by its devoted servants. But they do imply that it would better be.

Does any one fear that a more perfect knowledge of this institution, actually so imperfect, often so worldly and untrue—the congregations of the apostles themselves being disgraced by dissensions or by drunkenness at the Lord's table—will dampen the devotion of its adherents? On the contrary, it may both enlighten and sustain their spirit of devotion.

An uninstructed excursionist in the Holy Land is likely to meet with disappointment. He is not prepared for the sight of treeless plains and squalid villages, but only for scenes of beautiful and sacred suggestiveness; for is it not the Lord's own land upon which he is looking? Similarly a mere excursionist in the field of ecclesiology may be disappointed. For many of the things he sees are sadly different from the same things as pictured in his own mind. Can this be indeed the Lord's own inheritance, "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"? But in both

cases fact is more illuminative than fancy. Palestine, as it actually is, will serve better than any idealized Holy Land to illustrate the Book of whose "biography of Divine Love" it was once the scene; and the Church, as it actually is, forms a most effective background to the Church as it may and ought to be.

Too little knowledge, not too much, is the danger. The cure for any evils attendant upon an acquaintance with the Church is a closer acquaintance. The true, discerned thus amid its perversions or counterfeits, will appear all the more precious. If any have been inclined to grudge what offerings they are making to the Church, their hearts may be enlarged by a real knowledge of this kingdom of God as externalized on earth. If any have permitted the Church to come between them and the Saviour, not to mediate his power and glory to the soul, but to arrest the trustful love that should have passed on to find its object of worship in himself, it is equally urgent that they should discriminate more faithfully between symbol and substance, and not lose the knowledge of their Lord in the very ordinances which would help to make him known. If any have habitually thought of the Church in a mere local or sectarian spirit, it will mark the beginning of a new and holier consecration to see how much greater than all their outgrown fancies is Christ's holy Church universal.

Surely mind and heart, thought and reverence, the idea and the self-surrender, were made for mutual service in the pursuit of spiritual truth; that each might instruct the other.

On this subject there has been laid before us an original and authoritative teaching in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Covenant. Here all study of the fundamental principles and the supreme design of the Church must begin. It does not vitally concern us, indeed, to know what this or that man, or school of theology, or age, has thought and instituted; but to know the mind of Christ. We go back to him without whom there could have been no Church in the world—its Creative Wisdom, its Builder and Lord. So far as we shall be able, from the words, the acts, the spirit of Jesus, as these are shown in the New Testament, to learn what was the essential nature of the Congregation of which he was Founder, such knowledge may be accepted as final and sufficient. Let the test of moral earnestness be the open-mindedness and fidelity with which his disciples are willing thus to learn of him.

But ecclesiastical history is also replete with instruction. It furnishes many confirmations of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles, many painful deviations therefrom, many apparently reasonable and expedient developments thereof. What the New Testament would plant as a germ, the subsequent history will show in growth and fruitage.

On the other hand, alien growths, and fruit that is not bread and satisfies not, will illustrate by contrast that which bears the marks of the true and good. To the thrilling and eventful story of this heavenly plant in earthly soil, much marred and misused indeed by its cultivators, but never to be wrested from the care of the One Husbandman, we must, therefore, also attend.

The interest culminates in the Church of to-day—in the living present with its opportunities and resulting obligations. There are readers, indeed, who care only for the past. Nothing, whether person or event, is to them great and beautiful till it is somewhat idealized by the retrospective imagination. They love history for its own sake. Like the reading of fiction, it yields a certain intellectual pleasure. There are others whose whole delight is in the present time. They count it a mere waste of life to keep tracing courses of events that occurred “in the misty years gone by,” or the careers of men who have long since been called to their account. The voice of the present, not that of the past, is the voice to which they would listen.

But in point of fact the two are one. Beyond question the present is explained by the past, out of which it has come. The knowledge of yesterday is necessary to the knowledge of to-day. Accordingly the Church as it is now may be better known and better served in the light of its origin and history. It is not a case of fruit and root,

where the fruit may be satisfactorily analyzed or thoroughly enjoyed and utilized without digging down into the dark soil to inspect the root. It is rather the case of some old and powerful commonwealth, whose citizens do well to scrutinize present conditions through the aid of its original constitution and the experience of its successive generations in the art of government.

I have thought that this consideration may be specially pertinent to such topics as Lay Organization, the so-called Open Church, and the Federation of the Churches, in which evangelical Christians are likely at this time to be more than ordinarily interested. Viewed in their historical setting, these undertakings are more easily estimated at their real value and served with an abiding enthusiasm.

One more introductory word, which can be rightly spoken only in a spirit of reverent faith to which silence is oftener appropriate than any speech. To study the Church as it may be believed to exist in the mind and purpose of its Founder, is to make research into spiritual truth; and such truth cannot be otherwise than spiritually discerned. And surely this is no hard saying, to be met with the anxious or doubting inquiry, Who can hear it? If one who would write the biography of a man, or the history of a period, must, in addition to his outfit of knowledge, be able to enter sympathetically into the personal or corporate life

he would portray, it can be no less true that one who would undertake to interpret an institution of Jesus Christ, and its development at the hands of his followers, must seek to know, through an inner experience, somewhat of the mind of Christ and the motives of the Christian people. While, therefore, to despise literary materials, intellectual judgments, or any patient and diligent scholarly labor, would be fanaticism, to despise like-mindedness with Christ, as an organ of interpretation, would be presumption.

What must have been the vision and forecast of Jesus when he spoke of the "Church" which he would build? It is a question which no man can answer for another. Only the Spirit of truth can give the answer—that Spirit whose method of teaching is the communication of the Christlike mind to the truth-seeker. Apart from this inner guidance, any knowledge of Jesus' words or acts or institutions can be no more than a body without the informing spirit of life.

I

ASPECTS

"The guide of Christian progress is the word of Jesus, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.'"—*Henry Van Dyke*.

"The New, if it is to be lasting, must always have its roots in the Old."

"Let the Spirit of Christ fall upon isolated hearts, and immediately those hearts will want to get together. Burn all the churches in the world with all their Bibles and all their creeds, and let but one spark of the Christian spirit remain, and out of the ashes will come another Church."—*Charles E. Jefferson*.

"Make my prayer from beginning to end a duet. Let it ever have two voices—my brother's and my own."—*George Matheson*.

"The individual and society are two separate aspects of man's nature, neither of which must be either ignored or overemphasized. Either extreme gives an unreal thing and plunges both theory and life into difficulty. The real entity is not the individual separately nor society separately, but the individual in society or the society as composed of individuals."—*Sidney L. Gulick*.

I

AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD REPRESENTED

THERE fell into the hands of a clever young Japanese a copy of "The Gospel According to Matthew." With no special object, he began to read the book, and soon became interested in its contents. That which chiefly impressed him was one of the sayings in the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." What could it mean? what is the kingdom of God? This was the question with which the newly won reader of Jesus' words came shortly afterwards to a minister of the gospel, seeking instruction. Could he have asked a more significant question, or one more appropriate to his entrance upon the Christian life and the calling of a Christian missionary, which he is now pursuing? The kingdom of God—it was concerning this great divine reality that the first and the last words of Jesus' own ministry were spoken.¹

I do not know a fitter starting point for a study of the Church than this initial inquiry of a student of Christianity, What does Jesus mean by the *kingdom of God*?

¹Matt. iv. 17; Acts i. 6-9.

Either the name itself or some synonymous phrase occurs not only in the teaching of our Lord but again and again in the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Covenant. Yet the Scriptures do not define it: they are not a book of definitions. Let it be defined as *the accepted reign of God in human hearts*. The idea is not political nor material, but wholly spiritual. It is that of the Moral Order, that of God's righteous government of men as those whom he has made to be sharers of his own life. Wherever any man hears the voice of God within, and willingly obeys the law of righteousness which it reveals as the highest law of his being, there the kingdom of God is set up.

It may be at the ends of the earth, where neither the light of Calvary nor of Sinai has fallen. For if the Spirit of God be there, illumining the conscience, and the moral imperative of the conscience thus illumined be obeyed, God is ruling in the heart of that man. This is the world-wide vision that came to the Judaic apostle and helped to make him an apostle of the Son of Man: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."² Indeed, it seems to have come dimly even to Caiaphas the high priest, when he prophesied that Jesus should die not only for the nation of Israel, "but

²Acts x. 34, 35. Cf. Rom. ii. 14, 15, 28, 29.

that he might also gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.”³ With which Scripture instances agrees the testimony of a succession, broken but lustrous, of Christian witnesses, from Justin Martyr to John Wesley.⁴

I

But in Israel the Eternal was known and his dominion accepted as nowhere else on earth. Above all, when the Christ came his word of annunciation to the people was, “The kingdom of God is at hand.” In himself it was to appear, that vision of the Heavenly Order, as never before—in his teaching, his personal life, his cross and resurrection. It had always been here; but it was now at hand in the new world-era of the Christian revelation. It should be shown to be the kingdom of the Father, citizenship exalted to sonship—“Our Father who art in heaven. . . . Thy kingdom come.” It should also be shown to be the kingdom of the Son of Man; for to him was to be given the supremacy of the race, all judgment and authority: “My kingdom is not of this world. . . . Art thou a king, then? . . . Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”⁵ In the comprehensive word of Paul to the Ephesians, it

³John xi. 51, 52.

⁴“Apology,” i. 46; Augustine, “Confessions,” x. 24; Wesley, “Journal,” October 11, 1745.

⁵John xviii. 36, 37. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24.

is "the kingdom of Christ and God."⁶ Here, then, among those to whom the supreme Divine self-revelation has been made, rather than among any other people, may we expect that there will be the reign of God in the heart.

In truth, relatively speaking, this inner reign of God may be said to have been first established at his coming into the world in Jesus Christ. All that went before had no glory by reason of the exceeding glory now shining forth. Accordingly we hear our Lord declaring that before the coming of John the Baptist there were "the law and the prophets," but since his coming "the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached."⁷ Indeed, he speaks of the Baptist himself as an outsider.⁸ John was not in the light and glory of the kingdom as it was then about to come with power through Christ and the Spirit. He who was "but little in the kingdom of God," therefore, was even greater than its immediate herald.

As to the word *kingdom* (*βασιλεία*), it may be used in either an abstract or a concrete sense. As an abstract term, it means "kingship," "sovereignty," "royal power." As a concrete term, it means "kingdom" as this word is nowadays ordinarily understood—namely, "a realm," "a territory and people under royal government."⁹ Our Lord uses

⁶Eph. v. 5. ⁷Luke xvi. 16. ⁸Luke vii. 28.

⁹In English as in Greek the abstract is the primary sense of the word. The suffix *-dom*, meaning quality

the word in both these senses: in an abstract sense, when he speaks, for example, of "the Son of Man coming in his kingdom";¹⁰ in a concrete sense, when he says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."¹¹ There are also some of Jesus' sayings in which either sense would seem to be appropriate; for example, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹² In fact, each sense fairly implies the other; for kingship embodies itself in a kingdom, and a kingdom cannot exist without kingship. No serious obscurity therefore, is likely to result from any doubt that may arise as to which of the two meanings is intended in particular cases.

Now it is a familiar truth that things which are not seen are continually putting forth visible signs. The idea is ever seeking to become a fact. The soul has its body. It speaks languages, erects houses, creates homes, builds up civilizations. Otherwise it could neither develop its own powers nor come into effective contact with its fellows. If therefore the kingdom of God be in the world, it will make itself known outwardly. If men have

or state of being, *kingdom* is the quality or state of a king—that is to say, his jurisdiction, dominion, power. See Webster's International Dictionary, *s. v.*

¹⁰Matt. xvi. 28. Cf. Luke i. 33; xix. 11; xxiii. 42.

¹¹Matt. xix. 14. Cf. Matt. xvi. 19; Luke vii. 28; John iii. 5. Thayer, "Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament," *s. v.*; Vos, "The Kingdom of God and the Church," pp. 27-31.

¹²Matt. iv. 17. Cf. Matt. vi. 10; Luke ix. 27; xix. 11.

the knowledge of God and acknowledge his will as their one law, this life of the spirit must find some appropriate embodiment. It will take shape in personal conduct, in rites of worship, in literature, in art, in organized societies. Otherwise it could neither develop itself nor serve and save the world.

The spiritual realm must *appear*. In the life of Jesus the Son of God? Yes; there it is perfectly bodied forth, but measurably also in the lives of all God's children. Like any natural life-germ, though hidden it is not secretive. In both personal and social relations it will show the proper signs of its presence in all acts and habits of holy love.

Here arises the Church. It is distinctively the outward and institutional form of the kingdom of God. Hence, in Paganism, where this kingdom is so rarely and vaguely known in men's hearts, there is no Church; in Israel, where the true and living God was made known in righteousness, the Church appeared, but in rudimentary form, not as yet dissevered from the State; in Christianity, where the fullest knowledge of God and his redeeming grace is given, the Church appears, grievously imperfect indeed, yet, as compared with Israel, rejoicing in fullness of power, a missionary organization proclaiming the word of the Cross to every people. The Church of Christ is the sovereignty of Christ in the soul, Christ's kingdom,

God's kingdom, the "kingdom of the Son of his love," in its institutional earthly expression.

We can understand, then, why it is that in the Gospels so much is said of the Kingdom, while in the Acts and Epistles so much is said of the Church. Jesus taught the things of the spirit, the innermost life, communion with the Most High. He brought the sense of eternity into time, and made the spiritual world a reality to men's consciousness. Was there a Church at the time? There was the Church of Israel; Jesus himself was numbered among its members and gave his sanction to its rites.¹³ But concerning this or any other institution there is very little to be found in the Master's teaching. Not an institution, not anything that is *about* men, but that which is and that which ought to be *in* them—that which they may and must become—was the burden of his message concerning humankind.

Besides, through the life and death of Jesus the Church of Israel was waxing old and passing away. Rather it was passing into the Christian institute and thus reaching its predestined aim. Soon there would be gathered about the Christ the new Israel, the Christian Ecclesia. But even while Jesus was preparing for this Church—training the Twelve and instituting the rites of initia-

¹³Cf. Luke ii. 21, 41, 42; Matt. iii. 13-15; iv. 23; v. 23, 24; xxiii. 23.

tion and fellowship, baptism and the Lord's Supper—that of which he spoke habitually was something greater. It was that eternal Kingdom which the Church, as it arose, must represent, and whose universal coming must be the end of all ecclesiastical forms and activities. So we are not surprised to find that in Jesus' recorded sayings the Kingdom is mentioned continually—more than a hundred times—and the Church but twice.¹⁴

Is the case, then, utterly different in the Acts and Epistles? Not utterly different. The Kingdom is still conspicuous;¹⁵ but the Church also becomes conspicuous. The gospel of Jesus is falling upon men's hearts from tongues of fire, the kingdom of God is coming with power; men of every nation are becoming disciples of Jesus,

¹⁴Once (Matt. xvi. 18) in the universal and once (*ibid.* xviii. 17) in the local sense.

It may also be noted that both these passages favor the idea of the Church as representing the kingdom of God rather than as identical with it. For if the Church be the institutional form, or representative, of the Kingdom, we might well suppose that the keys of the Kingdom, the authority to declare the Divine acceptance or condemnation, would be intrusted to its keeping. And on the other hand, if the Church and the Kingdom are to be regarded as one and the same, why should both terms be used—"I will build my *Church*," "I will give unto thee the keys of the *kingdom of heaven*"?

¹⁵Cf. Acts viii. 12; xix. 8; xxviii. 23; Rom. xlv. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 20; and other passages.

and as such are uniting into societies in his name. The Kingdom is projecting itself upon the world in visible embodiment as the Church. Therefore the Church will have prominence in the apostles' thought, and to the care of its steadily increasing congregations a large share of their ministry must be given. But observe, not for the Church's own sake. As we shall see later, it has no reason to exist, save as the outward representative and servant of God's reign within. Accordingly we find that the gospel which had been delivered unto the apostles, their word of preaching, like that of Jesus himself, was not the Church but the kingdom of God. "Among whom," says Paul, "I went about preaching the kingdom."¹⁶

II

But this view of the relation of the Church to the Kingdom has not been universally held. It has been widely taught that the two names may be used interchangeably. The Church, which is defined as Christ's followers organized for worship and service, does not represent but actually *is* the kingdom of God.¹⁷

¹⁶Acts xx. 25; xxviii. 23. Cf. Luke xvi. 16.

¹⁷Augustine, "The City of God," xx. 9; "Westminster Confession," xxv.; Trench, "Notes on the Parables," p. 77; Gore, "Church and Ministry," p. 204; and Anglican writers generally. For the view presented in the text, see Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," p. 19.

In Matt. xiii. 41, 47-50, and xxi. 43, "kingdom of

Again, it has been taught by a few that there is indeed no distinction between the Church and the Kingdom, the two names denoting the same institution and body of people; but this body of people is the whole community, or the "social state in which the Spirit of Christ reigns," whether all its members are personal disciples of Christ or not; that what is ordinarily called "the Church" is properly but a single branch of the Church, the other branches being all those human associations that exist for good and worthy ends, such as the family, the society for the promotion of art or knowledge or industry or social intercourse, and the nation; that the completest form in which the Kingdom, or Church, is found at present is the Christian nation—that this, in fact, of present organizations alone can claim the name of "Church"; and that all nations will eventually unite in acknowledging the lordship of Christ, and thus constitute the universal Church, or the universal kingdom of God on earth.¹⁸

Still again, it has been said that while such a description as the foregoing is true of the king-

heaven" seems to be used in the sense of "Church." But if one should say that that which represents the Church is here spoken of as the Church itself, it would not be an unreasonable exegesis.

¹⁸This is the view which Canon Freemantle so ably presents in his Bampton Lectures, "The World as the Subject of Redemption."

dom of God, it is not true of the Church; that the two terms are not convertible; that the old familiar view of the Church as Christ's people organized for worship and service, is the true view; but that as to the kingdom of God, it indeed may be regarded as the whole Christian community in all its various functions and associations, with the Church as the chief organ in the accomplishment of its work.¹⁹

Now there is much truth made prominent in these latter two conceptions. The family and the nation are Divine institutions; knowledge, art, industry, social intercourse, are in their essential idea religious, and whatever societies are formed for their furtherance ought to be in spirit, if not in form, Christian societies. So far as Christian men take part in them, they will be such, and will help to establish the kingdom of God. Let them all be claimed for Christ; because in proportion as they are truly understood and perfected, it is his Spirit that will rule in them all. But it also seems clear that if we keep to the New Testament meaning and use of terms, we must think of the kingdom of God as that citizenship of souls which exists only where there is in some true sense conscious loyalty to him; whereas societies for the

¹⁹Washington Gladden, "The Church and the Kingdom," pp. 5, 6, 11, 12. Cf. Weiss, "Religion of the New Testament" (English translation), p. 410.

promotion of knowledge, art, industry, and social intercourse, or even such societies as the family and the nation, may exist where God's will is not acknowledged at all.

It is true that all things in heaven and earth are included under the Divine government.²⁰ The whole natural creation is a realm of laws that express the Creator's will.

Who maketh the winds His messengers,
Flames of fire His ministers.

So with men.²¹ Their life, physical and mental, is lived, every moment of it, in the presence of the one Lawgiver, "even Him who is able to save and to destroy." Over all their interests and activities, their societies, their civilizations, God reigns. What were human history without his almighty hand, guiding, punishing, governing?

There was also a revelation of God as in a very special sense king of the chosen nation. "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel *mine inheritance*."²² But when we reach this human sphere, the new fact of personality emerges; and that makes an absolute difference. Man's nature is morally constituted. He may either do or refuse to do the will of God as the law of his life. Thus it is possible for him either to enter or refuse to enter a kingdom of righteousness; and this is "the kingdom of God

²⁰1 Chron. xxix. 11. ²¹Ps. xxiv. 1. ²²Isa. xix. 25.

and his righteousness" that Jesus has bidden us seek. All that goes before it, both in nature and in humanity, prepares the way for it and coöperates with it in the fulfillment of God's all-comprehending plan. Nothing is merely "secular"; nothing is profane except sin.

The wayside weed is sacred unto Him.

But it does not follow that all things, either material or human, are included in the Christian idea of the kingdom of God. Those only are included in it that demand the reign of God in the heart.

III

In the Gospel of Matthew the word is uniformly the "kingdom of *heaven*." It is a name suggestive of—what large and lofty spiritual relationships! One mark of men's littleness of faith is that they imagine the heavenly world a very distant sphere or a very strange state of existence—as, for example, in the common misapplication of the prophet's words, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the *land that is very far off*."²³ Such is not the spirit of the New Testament. It will not be any one's spirit, so far as he appropriates the truth of Jesus' word, "the kingdom of heaven," and prays with heart and life the prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done

²³Isa. xxxiii. 17, A. V.

on earth as it is *in heaven*." The difference between the life of holy and loving obedience as it is lived here and now and as it is lived by the sons of God on high,

The great intelligences fair

That range above our mortal state,

is a difference not of kind but of degree. Their citizenship, their mind, may also be ours. In churches and homes and market places, on the street, in the kitchen, beneath the stars, "he that believeth *hath* eternal life." Yes; not only above but also beneath the stars is the kingdom of *heaven*.

In a similar manner, the close kinship between the Christian life in this world and that life which awaits realization when "there shall be time no longer," is indicated by the use, especially in the Pauline epistles, of the word "kingdom of God" for the latter as well as the former. The apostle who describes the kingdom of God as a present possession of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," also declares, speaking of the necessity of resurrection, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."²⁴ The same descriptive name is given to that which shall appear in glory and that which already exists on earth.

²⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 50. Cf. 2 Thess. i. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 1.

IV

And now if the Church be the kingdom of God in institutional expression, the outward representative of God's reign within, an answer is suggested to the question, What is the Church for? Its one business is to realize the coming of this heavenly kingdom upon earth. It is simply a means to this sublime end.

Hence it is first of all a missionary force. It has been sent forth in all the world to gain men for obedience to God in Jesus Christ. "God hath set some in the Church, *first* apostles." Then, too, the Church, in order to the accomplishment of its end, must be all the while nurturing, governing, edifying its children, that it may "present every man perfect in Christ." Nor is there any conflict between these two functions, the evangelistic and the pastoral. On the contrary, each sustains the other, and both together promote the triumph of the Kingdom.

It should attend us through all our studies, this idea of the Church's "final cause."

Two misconceptions of its practical workings are specially to be avoided. The first is a *false other-worldliness*. The Christian may cease to feel interested in the common relations of life. Practically he may interpret the precept, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," as prohibiting much more than "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of

life.”²⁵ Withdrawing himself in spirit from both the natural and the human world, neither nature nor man pleases him; nor would he be pleased by them. All is transitory and vain; every beautiful thing hides a snare. His ever-present object is to make a way safely out of this world to a home on high. The ascetic ideal is revered as the most truly Christian.

Now so far as this spirit prevails among Church members, the Church is alien to the life of the community in which it is located. The physical well-being of the people, education, the press, moral reforms, municipal government, are matters of indifference. The one plan and purpose of organized Christianity is supposed to be the direct leading of individual souls to Christ, and the culture of devout character.

The other misconception is *secularism*. Christianity is approved as chiefly useful in the regulation of the life that now is; it makes for decent and respectable conduct; it is an effective civilizer. We are not to think much about the future or the supersensible sphere: such matters are too high for us, we know and can know little or nothing of them. Let us therefore be content with getting all possible natural good out of the world, and trying to make things somewhat better for those about us. Such is the secular spirit. It supposes

²⁵1 John ii. 15, 16.

godliness to be "a way of gain."²⁶ In its presence eternity becomes an unknown and practically unconsidered quantity. Earth and time are all.

So far as this spirit prevails, the Church will lose its distinctive character as a witness to the salvation that is in Christ, and will make his kingdom consist in some form of outward and temporal affairs, not in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

But there is a true other-worldliness. It was exemplified in Jesus our Lord. He lived the heavenly life here in the flesh, and would have his people do the same. And compared with this life of the spirit, all earthly interests are verily without worth. Nevertheless they do have a value in themselves, and moreover are inseparably connected with the higher life. The kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men may help and be helped by sanitation, schools, science, home life, civil government. Here is not a matter of antagonism, but of coöperation. Christianity is neither monkhood nor clericalism. A true-minded Christian congregation will be a congregation of benefactors, of reformers, of students, of good neighbors, of conscientious voters, of alert citizens. The Pharisees were separatists, but "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till *it was all leavened.*"

²⁶1 Tim. vi. 5.

To make any institution or pursuit Christian is not to denaturalize, but to perfect it. Christianizing is humanizing. That half-conscious striving upward that has always marked the struggles and longings of the race finds its answering voice in nothing less and in nothing other than the humanity of Jesus. In him is unveiled to whoever has eyes to see the mystery of the universe, which is the law of love. Very wide is the application of his own great announcement, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."

But equally unmistakable is the militant aspect of the kingdom of God. It is come to destroy. The Fulfiller of law and prophecy, whether written in the Hebrew Scriptures or on the living tablets of the heart, came to "cast fire upon the earth."²⁷ To give peace? "Nay; but rather division."²⁸ He sent the sword.²⁹ The antagonistic kingdom is "the world." Not the natural world, for that is a temple for the glory and praise of the Creator: said Jonathan Edwards, the unworldliest of men, "Looking upon the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God that I know not how to express." Not the human world, for that has been so loved of God that he gave his own Son for its salvation. But the human world as represented by that sinful spirit that dominates the unrenewed heart.

²⁷Luke xii. 49. ²⁸Luke xii. 51. ²⁹Matt. x. 34.

This is the meaning when the New Testament declares the world to be in antagonism with the life of God in the soul.

Here, then, is the age-long conflict of light and darkness that may not suffer a moment's truce or compromise: not between the kingdom of God and men's institutions, pursuits, and interests, but between moral truth and error, between holiness and sin, between the kingdom of God and the world-spirit.

What shall be said of the Church as an actually existing institution in this conflict? It is never wholly on one side or the other. There is in it much of the world-spirit. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes "the Church of God which is at Corinth" as those that are "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," "enriched in him in all utterance and in all knowledge," called of God "into fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is a description not so much of what that Church was as of what it had been divinely intended to become—"called to be saints"—and had only begun to be. For the Apostle immediately adds that he hears of "contentions" among them: "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner of men?"³⁰

A Church of God as it is in the divine idea is

³⁰1 Cor., *passim*.

only in part the actual Church of God as it was in Corinth: and so the case has been in every age and in every place even till now. The Church does not represent the kingdom of God fairly and fully in any community. Everywhere it is invaded and in some measure won over by the world. In its worship, in its preaching, in its social life, in the setting up and administration of its government, has this false spirit been manifest.³¹

But so far as it shall keep true to its ideal as an embodiment of God's kingdom for the making of his will the universally accepted law of life, the Church, through its very sympathy with all that makes for the welfare of men, will stand in steady and unfaltering antagonism with the moral evil that is destroying them.

³¹Cf. Matt. xx. 20-28; xxiii. 8-12; 3 John 9, 10.

II

AS THE NEW ISRAEL

IN the message that first fell from the lips of Jesus, the old and the new were equally noteworthy—"The kingdom of God is at hand." And the whole life of the One who came proclaiming it was to unfold the contents of this initial word. What, then, were its contents? The King, who had heretofore made himself known by the name of Jehovah, the Eternal, the Holy and Merciful, keeping covenant with his elect, was now to be made known as the heavenly Father, speaking, ministering, judging, reigning, in his Son Jesus the Lord; the Law, which had been interpreted from time to time by prophetic teachers, was now to be interpreted by the Prophet whose coming they had foretold; the citizens of the Kingdom, who had been taught to live together in the spirit of righteous brotherhood, were now to learn the depth and breadth of brotherly love in the Son of Man; the center-truth of the Kingdom, the atoning love of God, which had been both hidden and revealed in the sacrifices of the altar and the cryptic utterances of prophecy, was now to be unveiled in the Sacrifice of the Cross; the Christ, upon whom all hopes of the future manifestation of the

Kingdom had ever been fixed, was already present in person and claiming allegiance. All this was at hand.

Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled."¹ That which had been from time far-past, not only in the thought and purpose of the Eternal but also in the unconquerable hope of faithful souls, was about to be realized. The confession of faith had always been, "The Lord reigneth"; it was now, "Behold, he cometh."

I

Is the same thing true of the Church as of the Kingdom itself? Is it also continuous through the ages, essentially the same since Christ's coming as before? Judaism and Christianity are sometimes vaguely spoken of as if one were false and the other true, or at least as if in every respect they must be contrasted with each other. But Judaism, the religion of Israel, was the earlier form of Christianity, and the Church of Israel the earlier form of the Christian Church.

Our Lord himself during all his earthly days lived in the communion of the Church of Israel. He received in infancy the sign of the Abrahamic covenant; he went up to the Holy City at the annual religious feasts; he attended the services of the synagogue; he ate the Passover with his disciples on the very evening of his Passion, and with

¹Mark i. 15.

great desire had he desired it. Nor did Jesus ever say to any of the Jews who believed on him that they must quit the Church of their fathers. On the contrary, it was in accordance with his instructions that they should observe its ordinances and obey its teachings.² His disciples would be excommunicated from the local congregations of the Church, but they were not bidden to withdraw: "They shall *put you out* of the synagogue."³

If, amid the multitude that heard Jesus' words, there were restless and revolutionary spirits ready to applaud the snapping asunder of whatever ties were binding them to the sacred past, their expectations were doomed by his own explicit announcement: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."⁴ It was the old principle of brotherhood that Jesus enunciated, but side by side with it the new commandment, "*Even as I have loved you*, that ye also love one another,"⁵ in which that which had been from the beginning found fulfillment; it was the old prophetic truth that he delivered, as fulfilled in his evangel; it was the old way of salvation that he pointed out (there can be no other), as fulfilled in his atoning sacrifice; it was the old Church in which he would

²Matt. v. 23, 24; viii. 4; xxiii. 2, 3.

³John xvi. 2. ⁴Matt. v. 17. ⁵John xiii. 34.

have all men claim membership, as fulfilled in the fellowship and congregation of those who should believe on his name.

Between a man of thirty and a child of three, the difference is great indeed. The man looks back to the time

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,

as a far-off dream. For has he not died every day to his former self? Childhood and youth have yielded hopelessly before advancing age. Nor has the attainment of manhood, physical and mental, been altogether in the way of slow and gradual growth. There may have been sharp transitions. Perhaps the man can tell of a time when the horizon of the mind seemed suddenly lifted, and he began to live and move in a distinctly wider realm of thought—like Adam Clarke, who could recall the very day, in early youth, when his intellectual darkness was turned into the light in which his whole after life was lived. The moral character may have radically changed: there may have been the birth from above, giving personal knowledge of the kingdom of God. Nevertheless it is his own childhood upon which the man looks back; the sense of personal identity remains: he is the same being as ever before. Similarly the Church of God has had its childhood. It was then “under guardians and stewards.” The altars of sacrifice,

the priestly vestments, the divers washings and purifications, were the primers and picture cards with which God instructed his Church in its infantile years. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt. . . . Yet I taught Ephraim to go; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them."⁶ In Christianity, under the larger ministrations of the Spirit, the Church attains unto an imperfect yet real manhood; and the picture cards are replaced by the ampler word of truth for which they have prepared the way. But whether earlier or later, it is one and the same Church of the ever-living God. No change, however significant, has broken its continuity.

II

It may be advisable to speak less figuratively. Let us, then, keep close to the facts as they have been delivered to us by those who "from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." We look upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and rightly, as the Founder of the Christian Church. Did he not solemnly declare on the only occasion when he spoke of the Church as a future and universal institution, "Upon this rock I will build my Church?"⁷ But the word which Jesus here uses (*ἐκκλησία*, congregation, assembly) was the Greek word not only for the citizens of a Greek city-

⁶Hosea xi. 1-3. ⁷Matt. xvi. 18.

state called together by a herald for the consideration of matters of public interest,⁸ but also for the congregation of Israel, whether regarded as actually called together or not. In his defense before the Sanhedrin, Stephen said: "This is the Moses that was in the church (*ἐκκλησία*) in the wilderness."⁹ In the Septuagint, which was extensively read even in Palestine in our Lord's time, the word is most frequently employed in this sense—that is to say, to represent the people of Israel as a community without reference to their being called together in a public assembly.¹⁰ It was the old church name. The word itself, therefore, suggests a close connection between the religious society which Jesus would found and that which was from the beginning.¹¹

⁸This was the classic use of the word. In later Greek it was applied to any assemblage, however irregular and disorderly—even to an assembled mob, as in Acts xix. 32, 41.

⁹Acts vii. 38.

¹⁰Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. Congregation.

¹¹The principal senses in which the word is used in the New Testament are the following: 1. That of a local body of Christian people assembled (Acts xviii. 22; 1 Cor. xiv. 4). 2. That of a local body of Christian people not assembled (Acts viii. 1, 3; xii. 1). 3. That of the whole body of Christian people as represented in some particular place (Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. i. 2). 4. That of the whole body of Christian people—the universal sense, as shown in our Lord's

But does not Jesus say "*My Ecclesia*," making a distinction between those who should be gathered into brotherhood as believers in him, and the preceding ecclesia of Israel? Undoubtedly; but in order to see what the exact distinction is, let us remember by whom and in what circumstances it was made. Jesus had just been confessed by Simon Peter as Messiah. "Who say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Then follows the momentous assertion: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock"—upon this prophet-apostle, making the first confession of Messiahship, which it had been given him to see in Jesus of Nazareth, upon him as a first foundation stone—"I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."¹² It was the congregation of the Christ. But the Christ was the predestined Lord of the congregation of Israel, in whom the fathers throughout their generations had been taught to hope, as him in whom Jehovah's people were to find their redemption and their glory. Thus was the ecclesia of Jesus Christ organically connected with the ecclesia of Israel, the declaration quoted in the text, and in two of the Pauline epistles (Eph. i. 22; v. 25; Col. i. 18). See Hort, "*The Christian Ecclesia*," Lect. I.

¹²Matt. xvi. 13-20.

clesia of Israel—not its antagonist nor yet its mere successor, but its fulfillment. It was the new Israel.

Accordingly the disciples of Jesus, even after the great illumination of Pentecost, showed no consciousness of being outside the Church of their fathers. Their Master had not bidden them forsake the temple and its services; therefore “day by day continuing steadfastly with one accord *in the temple*, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart.” Peter and John went “*up into the temple* at the hour of prayer.”¹³ Peter, like any other Israelite, addressed the people as brethren (ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί); and it was his exhortation, “Save yourselves”—not from the congregation or institutions of Israel—“from this crooked generation,”¹⁴ these misbelievers in the faith of the fathers. James, in his speech at the council in Jerusalem, refers in the language of an ancient prophet¹⁵ to the Christian Church as the “tabernacle of David” rebuilt out of its ruins, “that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord that maketh these things known *from the beginning of the world.*”¹⁶

The fact that a man had been baptized in the

¹³Acts iii. 1. ¹⁴Acts ii. 40. ¹⁵Amos ix. 11.

¹⁶Acts xv. 16-18.

name of Jesus did not separate him from the congregation of Israel any more than did the fact that he had been baptized in the river Jordan at the hands of John; because Jesus, being Messiah, had authority to institute such a baptism. The fact that Jesus' disciples became a brotherhood holding their own meetings, "with one accord in one place," did not imply that they were cut off from Israel. Theirs was one school, or sect,¹⁷ or Way¹⁸ of worship and conduct—might it not be said, one synagogue?—among others.¹⁹ Once at least it is referred to in the New Testament by this last name—"If there come into your *synagogue* a man with a gold ring."²⁰ At the same time, it was such a school, sect, synagogue as all the people must form, such a Way as all must enter, or else cut themselves off from the religion of their fathers.

The whole question may be condensed into a single twofold statement: Since Jesus was the Christ, those who accepted him, if Jews, continued in the Church, and if Gentiles, entered it; and on the other hand, those who rejected him, if Jews, separated themselves from the Church, and if Gentiles, continued in separation therefrom.

¹⁷Acts xxiv. 5, 14. ¹⁸Acts ix. 2; xix. 9.

¹⁹Cf. the relation of the early Moravians to the national Church of Bohemia, or the relation of the early Wesleyans to the Church of England.

²⁰James ii. 2. Cf. Acts vi. 9.

III

Was this, then, the doctrine of the Apostle to the Gentiles? did he hold that those to whom his ministry was specially devoted were coming, through faith in Jesus Christ, into the communion of God's ancient people? This is indeed the thought that appears repeatedly in his teachings. "But if some of the branches [unbelieving Israel] were broken off, and thou [believing Gentiles], being a wild olive tree, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree."²¹ All were not Israel that were of Israel. Who, then, were the true Israel? "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."²² Paul will not give the historic church name, "the circumcision," to the Judaizers, who reject the Messiahship of Jesus, but invents for them a new name: they are "the concision," and he bids the Christians "beware" of them.²³ Again: "And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and [or *even*] upon *the Israel of God*."²⁴ As for himself, Paul said that, though after the way which they (his misbelieving opponents) called "a sect," he served the God of his fathers, "believing all things which are according

²¹Rom. xi. 17, 18. ²²Phil. iii. 3. ²³Phil. iii. 2.

²⁴Gal. vi. 16.

to the law and which are written in the prophets"; and that his violent arrest found him "*purified in the temple.*"²⁵ Was he chained to a soldier and sent as a prisoner to Rome? It was not because he had done anything contrary to the customs of the fathers; but "because of the *hope of Israel*" he was "bound with this chain."²⁶ Ecclesiastically, as well as racially and religiously, this peerless proclaimer of Jesus as Messiah was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews."

God had not cast away his people; but the promise made to Abraham the forefather was fulfilled in Jesus; and so from Abraham to the Lord Jesus Christ the chosen and redeemed ecclesia was organically one.²⁷

The same truth is strongly suggested in the name by which the Church is uniformly described in the New Testament. It is called "the Church of God."²⁸ One might have supposed that it would be called "the Church of Christ." Did not Jesus himself, confessed as Messiah, call it *his* Church? Especially in reading the Pauline epistles, where every mental movement of the writer is transfused with the consciousness of the living Christ, who is specifically set forth as breaking down all barriers and making all peoples—Hebrew, Greek, Barbarian—one in himself, we might have ex-

²⁵Acts xxiv. 14-18. ²⁶Acts xxviii. 17-20.

²⁷Gal. iii. 16-29.

²⁸Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. x. 32; 1 Tim. iii. 5.

pected to meet again and again with the descriptive name "the Church of Christ." But it is not so. Even in speaking of the outrages he committed against the disciples of Jesus, Paul says, "I persecuted the Church of God."²⁹ It is as if, throughout the New Testament, the conception of the continuity of the Church, before the coming of Christ and during his incarnate life and ever afterwards, was so prominent and prevailing that it must be embodied in a name that would remain one and the same through all eras and ages—"The Church of God." Certainly when the Christian Congregation was called by this name, any Jewish hearer, whether in Palestine or in the Dispersion, would associate it with the Church of which he read habitually in his Greek or Hebrew Scriptures.³⁰

It seems hardly necessary to add, that it would be an utter mistake to suppose that the idea of Christ's headship of the Church is rare in the

²⁹Gal. i. 13. "It is very striking that at this time, when his antagonism to the Judaizers was at its hottest, he never for a moment set a new Ecclesia against the old, an Ecclesia of Jesus or even an Ecclesia of the Christ against the Ecclesia of God, but implicitly taught his heathen converts to believe that the body into which they were baptized was itself the Ecclesia of God." (Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," p. 108.)

³⁰Cf. the chosen number of the apostles, apparently representing symbolically the twelve tribes of Israel; also Rev. iv. 4; xv. 3; xxi. 12, 14.

New Testament writings. In fact, it pervades them. It is the very crown and glory of the Church idea: "And gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."³¹ And in a few passages it is expressed, with reference to the local congregation, as a part of the Church name; as when Paul speaks of "the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus,"³² or says to the Romans, "All the churches of Christ salute you,"³³ or to the Thessalonians, "Unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."³⁴ But just as in the New Testament there appears predominantly the name "kingdom of God," which is also shown to be one with the kingdom of Christ, so is it with the institutional expression of God's kingdom, the Church. It is so named that we shall ever be reminded of its continuity, oneness, universality—"the Church of *God*."

IV

The Church therefore includes the people of God under both the Old and the New Covenant. Or, if one may attempt to describe it in the form of a definition, it is the ideally united societies of all those in all ages who truly receive the revela-

³¹Eph. i. 22, 23. ³²1 Thess. ii. 14; Gal. i. 22.

³³Rom. xvi. 16. ³⁴1 Thess. i. 1.

tion that God has given of himself, as recorded in the Scriptures.

Here, then, is the ecclesiastical succession. In its continuous history it reaches back to the father of the faithful. Through innumerable infidelities, usurpations, schisms, and idolatries, both in Israel and in Christendom, the Almighty's hand has been upon it, to preserve the sometimes worn and wasted remnant of his true witnesses, and to bring his own eternal counsel to pass. Even "before Abraham was," the uncreated Word was in the world he himself had made, and wherever men, under the illumination of his presence, met together, though but two or three were thus associated, "to call upon the name of Jehovah," there was "a house [household] of God, a Church of the living God," a pillar and stay of the truth. This and much more is the larger meaning when the confession is made. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints."

V

If this is so, what shall we say that Jesus did, in founding his Church? Fulfilling the Messianic, or *Christian*, prophecies, he gave himself for it; he redeemed it unto God with his own blood, and gathered it about his cross. But Jesus also chose a company of twelve men to be with him, as learners and doers of his Father's will, till it should become expedient that he should go away

from them. They were to be his apostles; but first of all, they were associated *disciples* (a school a flock, a household, a *church*), and it is by this name almost exclusively that they are known in the Gospels.³⁵ After the Ascension, they were sent forth by their Lord to win others everywhere into the same discipleship. Still further, Jesus instituted baptism as the rite of admission into this visible Christian ecclesia, and the Lord's Supper as the memorial of his passion and death, and the rite of fellowship with himself and with one another. Thus was the foundation laid for the building of the Church of God in the Messianic age.

No form or order of congregational worship was prescribed. The prayer that Jesus bade the disciples say, though essentially social and impossible to be offered in a spirit of selfishness, was not understood by them, nor, we may believe, intended by him, as a fixed form for their devotional meetings. He sung a hymn (one of the Passover psalms, probably) with the Eleven, just before passing from the holy rapture of the Upper Room into the agony of Gethsemane. He taught that those who believe in him should meet in his name, and should agree in their prayers. But when and how often they should pray, and what order of

³⁵They are called apostles by Matthew once, by Mark once, by Luke six times, by John not at all.

prayer and praise and Scripture reading should be observed by them, either privately or congregationally, was not to be learned either from the commands or from the example of their Lord. That was to be determined from time to time by themselves, in their own assemblies, through the promptings of their own inner life, under the guidance of the promised Spirit of truth.

And this liberty has been accepted without misgiving by the Churches in all the world, and used or abused according to the measure of the Christian mind attained by them. It has not been felt that there must have been given at the very beginning some positive and specific law in this matter.

It has seemed to many, however, that some fixed and unalterable form of ecclesiastical government must have been prescribed by the Lord. Not indeed as to matters of detail; for that would have been to lay a yoke of intolerable bondage upon his people; but as to certain paramount requirements. At least a norm of Church organization must have formed a part of the teaching of Jesus himself. Would such legislation be left even to the wisdom of men in whom the Spirit of truth was to abide?

But the less theoretical question is: Was it left so, as a matter of fact? This question, it will hardly be denied, has been answered affirmatively by the best New Testament scholarship of our day. We do find, on the successive pages of the New

Testament, everything that could be said or done to form the Christlike mind in the brotherhood of disciples, and to help them act in all the affairs of life with sound wisdom and discretion; but of one indispensable form of rule and administration in the Church, either in detail or in outline, there is no evidence. For here, too, has the Christian Congregation³⁶ been called unto liberty with all its joy and with all its pain of responsibility.

Ecclesiastical, unlike spiritual, needs are not of necessity the same in all places and throughout all generations. Therefore it has been made the duty of the Christian Church, choosing its own offices and officers, out of the consciousness of its own needs, to govern itself in the name of the one Saviour and King.

Through the testimony of Jesus' witnesses, the number of believers multiplied exceedingly. In

³⁶The word *congregation* will be used in this book as a synonym of *church*. It was the one word by which *ecclesia* was translated in Tyndale's New Testament, indeed in the New Testaments generally of the reign of Henry VIII., and in the Bishop's Bible of Elizabeth's reign. One of the items of instruction given the translators (or rather revisers) who produced our Authorized Version was: "The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, viz., the word *church* not to be translated *congregation*, etc." Of the two words, however, *congregation* better represents the original word than does *church*. See "Preface to the Revised Version"; Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," p. 2.

Jerusalem it soon came to be about five thousand, and increased "unto multitudes both of men and women." Throughout Palestine Christian congregations, composed of Jews, Samaritans, or half-Jews,³⁷ and proselytes,³⁸ were gathered.

In a significant passage in the book of Acts it is recorded: "So the Church throughout all Judea and Samaria and Galilee had peace, being edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied."³⁹ This fruitful calm after days of cloud and storm would seem to mark the completion of the first stage in a great history. The faithful in Israel, not few in number but multitudes, have acknowledged the crucified Jesus as Lord. In the homeland of Jehovah's people—Judea, Galilee, Samaria—is now this new and true Israel, the Congregation of the Christ, who has come to his own. The Church of God, within the geographical limits of its ancient abode, centered about the Holy City, has fully entered upon the Messianic age.

And now a question was raised, historically the first great question in ecclesiastical polity. Its importance could not well be exaggerated: for it brought on a crisis that so disturbed the peace of the Church as to threaten its very existence. It was on this wise. The gospel of the kingdom had

³⁷Acts viii. 1-25. ³⁸Acts ii. 10; vi. 5; x. 22, 35.

³⁹Acts ix. 31.

begun to be published beyond the limits of the land of Israel. Scattered by the persecution in which Stephen gained the martyr's crown, there were Christian disciples that found their way to Antioch in Syria. In this far-famed center of Græco-Roman civilization, a congregation made up of both Jews and Greeks was formed. Here, then, the inevitable question was formally and distinctly raised: On what terms may Gentiles be admitted into the Church? shall they be subjected to such requirements as have always been imposed upon proselytes to the faith of Israel, or shall they be received on simple profession of faith in Jesus Christ? A disastrous schism seemed imminent. But the mind of Christ was dominant in his people. The spirit of brotherhood and respect for authority, in the Antiochian brethren, prompted them to refer the question to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. These Christian leaders, assembled in council, were divinely guided to a decision which, in the way of compromise, successfully met the emergency.⁴⁰ The Church was being led, as fast as it grew strong enough to follow, into the full knowledge of the New Covenant in Christ, under which it should live and prevail.

Meantime the Apostle Paul, latest called and most abundant in labors of all the apostolic witnesses, had entered upon his ever-widening mis-

⁴⁰Acts xv. 28, 29.

sionary circuits. In Pisidian Antioch the first distinctively Gentile Christian congregation had been gathered. The great-hearted evangelist went on, opening the gate of faith not only to the Jews of the Dispersion but also to the nations, fully declaring the gospel of Christ in the chief cities of Asia and Europe. The same terms of salvation and of admission into Church fellowship were offered to all men without respect to race or previous religious faith.

The Judaic ritual rapidly fell away, displaced by the word and the sacraments of Christ. The new wine must have new bottles. Instead of circumcision, baptism; instead of the Passover, the Lord's Supper. The day of the Resurrection came to be celebrated, not through any specific enactment but through the teaching of the Spirit in Christian experience, as a day of joyful rest and worship, in place of the ancient Sabbath. The new Israel, called unto liberty, was both governed and trusted. Is it not God's way of making man, of developing personality, of educating his saints for service and supremacy? To them the Word and ordinances of their Lord are immutable law, but within these bounds of law the forms of liturgy and of organization must be freely chosen and maintained. To refuse any liberty with which they have been intrusted at his hand, would be not humility or obedience, but faithlessness. "The Jerusalem which is above is free."

But liberty is not disunion. On the contrary, it is a necessary condition of spiritual unity. It is an element of that inner life which, rather than any external pressure of command, has the power to unify souls. For human beings do not find their unity in uniformity and aggregation, like a building constructed with hammer and saw: they are "*living stones*,"⁴¹ which *grow* into a temple of the Lord.⁴²

⁴¹ Pet. ii. 5. ⁴² Eph. ii. 21.

III

AS A COMMUNION AND CONGREGATION

THE world is one. Across all distances of space and time the voices of the heart speak to each other, calling and answering. The subtle questioning, the idea tinged with emotion, the new experience that seemed peculiar to oneself—it appears some day in the words of another, written down perhaps in the tent of a warrior, perhaps in the cell of a monk, perhaps in the diary of an imaginative girl, centuries ago. Looking sympathetically into any piece of literature, one feels a heart-beat, or sees a face, which is at the same time another's and one's own.¹

A traveler at the ends of the earth, or a missionary making his home there, finds himself

"One recent summer at Oxford, I saw the clean, white skull—once the dome of thought—of that fair young girl who, dying in Egypt, was buried with her favorite copy of Homer under her head. . . . There lay together a coil of hair and the leaves of Homer's immortal song. With the instinct and the sympathy of a lover of letters, I could appreciate the maiden's desire, and with a thrill across the centuries I made greeting." (W. E. Griffis, in the *Sunday School Times*.)

among his own kith and kin. The most pitifully stunted growths of intellect and conscience—say, that of a Patagonian or a Negrito—do not prove the absence of the essential humanity of man. In spirit a man may shut the doors of his heart and live in enmity or indifference; but in fact he is still a member of the race and akin to all the rest. So, there is a world-wide communion of humanity.

Conspicuous among the common elements of human nature is the capacity for religion. Bishop Thoburn, of India, has said: "Going over this world, as I have been doing for many years past, I have been among people of many nations. They differ in many things. I am now in charge of a mission where we are preaching in twenty-five different languages. They differ in language; they differ in complexion; they differ in many respects in character; but in one respect they are all alike. Their sins are the same; their inward tendencies are the same; the consequences of their sins are the same. There is a blight that comes upon all, and it is exactly alike in all countries."²

I have heard a missionary, William H. Shepard, who had spent fifteen years in the heart of Africa, say that in all the journeyings of himself and his fellow-missionaries among the various tribes, cannibals and others, they had found none

²Address on *The Healing of the Nations*, in "*Missionary Issues of the Twentieth Century*," p. 47,

that did not believe in a Supreme Being, and on the other hand, none who believed "that he loved them." "If we had known that he loved us," said Christian converts, "we would have been singing to him."

Francis Parkman, whose views were widely at variance with those of the Christian missionary, tells a similar story of the American savage untouched by civilization: "The old man was quite unconscious of my presence. . . . I saw him seated alone, immovable as a statue, among the rocks and trees. His face was turned upward, and his eyes seemed riveted on a pine tree springing from a cleft in the precipice above. The crest of the pine was swaying to and fro in the wind, and its long limbs waved slowly up and down, as if the tree had life. Looking for a while at the old man, I was satisfied he was engaged in an act of worship or prayer, or communion of some kind with a supernatural being. . . . I knew that though the intellect of an Indian can embrace the idea of an all-wise, all-powerful Spirit, . . . he is prone to turn for relief to some inferior agency, less removed from the ordinary scope of his faculties."³

In their sins, in their feeling after God, if haply they may find him, in their need of revelation

³"The Oregon Trail" (H. M. Caldwell Company), p. 209. See also pp. 154, 185.

and redemption, the hearts of men beat with the same broken but unmistakable pulsations.⁴

Compare the bright-plumaged bird of an African forest with the savage who kills and devours it, or with the worse savage, the white slave-catcher, who, for the sake of a few dollars, or even from sheer wanton cruelty, enslaves or mutilates or murders his black brother. The bird is a delight of the eyes, the man an object of loathing. But there is at the same time an infinitely significant difference in the man's favor. The beautiful bird, though perfect in its kind, is a part of nature, with no higher impulse or idea: it seems to be already *made*. But the savage, black or white, is only in the making. In him is a lower, which is coarse-grained or diabolical nature, and a higher, which is potential sonship to God.

A spark disturbs our clod:

Nearer we hold of God

Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.

So there is a moral and religious kinship between soul and soul, wherever found—a religious communion of humanity.

“The definite establishment of this proposition is perhaps the greatest service that the history and psychology of religion have furnished. . . . The ‘tribe destitute of religion’ is found to be purely imaginary.” (Coe, “Education in Morals and Religion,” pp. 37, 38.)

I

The one answer to the religious need of the world is Christ. The same honored missionary bishop whose words were just now quoted has borne this witness: "There has been a great deal of speculation, or what you might call general moralizing; but in the space of more than forty years I have never met a man or woman who had a personal knowledge of God, unless it was some one who had found him through the agency of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ." Is not such an observation of facts in accord with the Lord's own word, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me"? Therefore it seems quite clear how all men may enter into conscious kinship in Christ, and how real their fellowship in him may become. Closer than that of a common humanity or that of a common religious need and potentiality is the affinity of those who have found their true self in the Son of God. There is a veritable brotherhood of those that "are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," a *Christian* communion.

Now this Christian communion will naturally and inevitably express itself in congregation. Like will not only find but associate with its like. Fellowship will congregate. Those who know one another in Christ must needs meet together. So close are they akin, so truly a spiritual household, that it would be difficult to picture them scattered here and there without external association or

bond of union. They will form congregations, assemblages, ecclesiae. And what are these congregations? Separately considered, they are Christian churches; in their totality, the universal Church of Christ.⁵

The first great example was given on the day of Pentecost; and it may be taken as marking the birthday of this Church of the New Covenant. For previous to this time the Christ had not been fully revealed by the Spirit even to his own disciples of two or three years' standing; and hence the word of testimony through which men were to be gathered together in his name had not been spoken. But now this new beginning, the consummation of the ages, was reached. Its significant features were, on the one hand, the power of the Spirit and the preaching of Jesus as the Christ, and, on the other, as a result, the conversion of souls to Jesus and their immediate association in Christian fellowship.

Let us recall the familiar but still inadequately appreciated story: The disciples now number a

⁵Whether, in the Apostles' Creed, the phrases, "the Holy Catholic Church" and "the communion of saints" are to be taken as appositional expressions, or whether "the communion of saints" means simply the spiritual fellowship of Christians on earth and in heaven, is matter of doubt. See Luther's "Larger Catechism"; "Westminster Confession of Faith," Chapter XXVI.; Schaff, "History of the Church," Vol. VI., p. 617, n.

little "multitude of persons, about a hundred and twenty."⁶ They are met in united prayer for the revealing and empowering Spirit, according to the promise of the Father; the promised gift is communicated from heaven—not an influence, but the Spirit himself making Christ known in believing hearts. It finds spontaneous expression in fervid witnessing speech, in which the glorified Christ is preached; people hear, are convinced, inquire what they shall do; they are baptized in the name of Jesus as the Christ; they continue in the teaching of the apostles, and in the new Christian fellowship; they partake of the Lord's Supper, and offer prayers together; others are added to their number from day to day of such as are being saved; and so the work of the interpreting and sanctifying Spirit goes on.⁷

Here, then, was the uprising of a visible brotherhood, an evangelical congregation, at a certain place, on a certain day. But what was the chief event on this day of Pentecost—that for which it stands preëminently? Not the gathering of a church, but the revelation of the divine Christ which made it possible. The social fellowship of the recipients of this revelation was an effect of their fellowship with him. And shall not this first day of the Christian Church be taken as a type of every subsequent day of its history? First, the common spiritual life, but immediately its

⁶Acts i. 15. ⁷Acts ii.

forms of expression and activity; first, the communion of saints, but with it the congregation; first, the realized kingdom of God, then the Church.

The rapid development of this congregationalism, this *church* idea, is illustrated in the three conspicuous names by which those who were won to the faith of Jesus Christ are designated in the New Testament. While the Master was yet with them in the flesh, as narrated in the four Gospels, they are called "disciples" (*μαθηταί*, learners). In the Acts this name is for the most part, and in the Epistles wholly, superseded by the name "brethren."⁸ Paul speaks of the Christians never as disciples, frequently as brethren. Now the word *disciple* is individualistic, it might be applied to a single person; but *brethren*, a correlative, implies that there must be at least one other person. *Disciple* makes prominent the relation to the teacher; *brethren* makes prominent the social relation. Disciples as such cannot, while brethren as such may, constitute a church.

Brethren *may* constitute a church. That which is necessary, in addition to mutuality, or brotherhood, is represented by the third of the three conspicuous names of Jesus' followers, in the New

⁸Only once are the disciples spoken of in the Gospels as "brethren"; and in this case—John xxi. 23—the word is evidently the name by which they were known at the time when the passage was written.

Testament. They are called, oftener indeed than by any other title, "saints" (ἅγιοι, set apart for God, holy ones). A company of brethren set apart for God in Jesus Christ do constitute and *are* a church.

So it was that the Christward relation of learners developed of necessity a social relation of brothers, all alike consecrated to the heavenly Father in Christ's name. It was all contained beforehand, both as a fact and as an ideal to be made more and more a fact, in the only Master's great word: "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your teacher and all ye are brethren."⁹

And now if one should ask, Is not *organization* an essential element of the church idea? the answer must be, that it is not. However useful, however practically certain to appear, it is not constitutive, not essential. A church may exist, genuine and complete, without a single officer, or established rule of procedure, or form of government. It may well be defined not as an organization but as "a *congregation* of faithful men."¹⁰

⁹Matt. xxiii. 10.

¹⁰"The church as *totum essentiale* is, and may be, before officers." (Thomas Hooker, Preface of "Sum of Church Discipline," Old South Leaflet, p. 11.)

II

Most of those who were thus brought into fellowship with the ascended Christ and with one another may be supposed to have been heads of families, fathers and mothers. How about their children? Were these also to be regarded, as in Israel, members of the Christian congregation, or were they not to be accounted of at all? Was membership in the New Israel to be purely individualistic, or should the family idea still find some ecclesiastical recognition?

The New Testament offers no direct answer to such a question. And its silence is often differently interpreted, apparently in accordance with the differing ecclesiological views of the interpreters. Some have said, It is because the case is plain enough that the children are still to have a share with their parents in the Lord's covenant; others have maintained, It is plainly because infant children, being incapable of repentance and faith, which are the conditions of Christian baptism, are in no sense whatever entitled to inclusion in a Church of Jesus Christ.

In view of the already existing inclusiveness of the Church, and of the strongly authoritative and representative character of the head of a household in Israel,¹¹ it would seem likely that at least the Jewish converts to the Messiahship of Jesus

¹¹Gen. xviii. 19; Lev. xix. 1-3; Josh. xxiv. 15; Luke xix. 9; Acts xvi. 31; 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

would expect somehow to include their households, and surely their infant children, in the new Congregation which they were entering. This inference is rendered distinctly more probable by the household baptisms narrated in the New Testament.¹² It is also strengthened by the teaching of Jesus, as this was becoming better and more widely known, concerning little children; for the worth and significance of childhood had never been so wondrously declared as in the words of the Son of Man.¹³

Here appears the rite of infant baptism. As in the case of the observance of the Lord's Day as a substitute for the ancient Sabbath, there is no direct testimony to its institution, either in the Scriptures or in the earliest Christian literature. Both observances, however, may be accepted as due not to the corruptions of Christianity but to its promised (though so often dishonored) guidance by the Holy Spirit. The infant is recognized in baptism as a child of God, potentially God's child in the fullest spiritual sense, redeemed in Christ, under the teaching and regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, an heir of the kingdom of heaven: and is trustfully dedicated to the Lord's service.

That such an ordinance, like adult baptism, the Lord's Supper, and all other means of grace, should have been so fearfully abused, is matter of

¹²Acts xvi. 15, 33; 1 Cor. i. 16.

¹³Matt. xviii. 10; xix. 14.

grief, if not surprise, to every instructed lover of the gospel.

That no infant child is qualified for full membership in the Church is unquestionable. That every such child is entitled to an initial Church membership may be taken as equally true. Here, for illustration, is an enlightened and faithfully ordered Christian home. The children are not left to themselves religiously in the hope that by and by, when they shall have reached years of discretion, they may be converted and saved. They are taught to believe in God and pray to him daily as their Father, to seek forgiveness and a new heart, to love and obey the Saviour, from their infancy. But the very same is the watch-care of the Church over the children. Whether the Church is defined as consisting "of all those, throughout the world, that profess the true religion, and of their children,"¹⁴ or not, it is to be a care-taker and a mother of the young people in its families, from their earliest years. Not waiting till their minds are preoccupied with error and evil, it is to pre-occupy them with truth and good. Through the pastor, the Sunday school, the catechetical class, and, above all, through the Christian parents themselves, it must "nurture them" not *for* but *in* the chastening and admonition of the Lord."¹⁵ Thus may they be brought, even in the dawn of

¹⁴"Westminster Confession of Faith," XXV. 2.

¹⁵Eph. vi. 4.

moral life, and more and more, into the communion and congregation of Christian believers.

And when in the presence of the assembled congregation, they shall intelligently and sincerely acknowledge as their own the truth which has been authoritatively taught them, and the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit which their baptism signifies, it shall be given them to be received formally and fully into all the privileges of the Christian household.

III

Again: every society forms itself about certain vital principles without which it could not exist at all. Of these principles, moreover, some one may be recognized as supreme and controlling. To illustrate: in a university, it is the pursuit of knowledge; in an industrial society, the production of wealth; in an art society, the sense of beauty; in a pagan cult, the conscious need mingled with the dread of supernatural beings; and so on.

In the Church, the supreme formative principle is *fellowship with Christ*. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ."

Need any one be reminded that such a fellowship is of measureless meaning? It includes all that the soul can know, enjoy, become. Because it is in Christ that we find God, in his highest and most

endearing self-disclosure—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"—and it is in Christ that we find man in all his possible divineness and glory: "Now we are children of God. . . . We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him." To commune with Christ is to *love*. It is to have the spirit of sonship toward the heavenly Father, and the spirit of brotherhood toward all his human children, especially toward those who are "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." It is to dwell in the Eternal Love.¹⁶

Nevertheless we are not to conceive of the Church as a mere voluntary association. It came into existence through no "social contract" or formal covenant. It is something that must be. It is an expression of the divine law and order. No less truly than the family and the State, the Church has been instituted, and the recognition of its claims made obligatory, by God himself. As it is not left to the parent to say whether he will

¹⁶"They are wroth with us, too, because we call each other brethren. . . . But we are your brethren as well, by the law of our common mother nature, though ye are hardly men because brothers so unkind. At the same time, how much more fittingly they are called brothers and counted brothers who have been led to the knowledge of God as their common Father, who have drunk in one spirit of holiness, who from the same womb of a common ignorance have agonized into the same light of truth." (Tertullian, "Apology," c. 39.)

acknowledge and care for his child, or to the child to say whether he will honor his parent; as it is not left to the inhabitants of any country to say whether they will acknowledge the legitimate authority of the civil government: so likewise is it not left to any man to accept or reject at his whim or pleasure the published will of God in Jesus Christ. He that being truly taught will not receive it, shall be condemned. But an inseparable part of this obligatory gospel is that congregational communion of believers which is therefore an ordinance of God.

Though love, then, is the motive force which assembles men together in Christ's name, it may not unfitly be reënforced by duty. The conscience may come to the help of the heart. There is no conflict, but a "preëstablished harmony," between these two inner impulsions—love, duty. Hence the injunction to "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling," who are even now showing love to God in ministration to the saints: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is."¹⁷

Indeed, is not love itself a *commandment*? Horace Mann, the great educator, said (in his Tenth Annual Report) that the state which he represented was "changing and ennobling the definition of a cardinal word in the language of

¹⁷Heb. iii. 1; vi. 10; x. 25.

morals, doing what no king or court with all their authority, nor royal academy with all their sages and literary men, can do—she is changing the meaning of *charity* into *duty*.” But in truth the ennobled definition had been made with the utmost distinctness, by the highest possible Wisdom and Authority—though not even then for the first time—nearly two millenniums before. In the law of Christ, love *is* duty.¹⁸ It is the ethics of Jesus, which is the splendid and perfect harmony of the soul, the abiding satisfaction of the moral nature, the highest state of moral being possible either to aspiration or thought.

Love is duty:

What further can be sought for or declared?

To say, therefore, that love, or fellowship with Christ, the formative principle of the Church, is reënforced by duty, is not to cast upon it any shade of disparagement, as if it had to summon a lower motive to its aid. Duty is not a lower motive: it moves on the same plane, side by side, in eternal brotherhood and oneness, with love.

IV

The Church is also one. Because the communion out of which all its congregations are formed is one; and this because it is a communion in one Person, the Son of Man.

This is everywhere Jesus’ teaching.

¹⁸Mark xii. 29-31.

This, too, is the reiterated apostolic testimony to the unified Church. "Ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."¹⁹ Many members, but one body, because one Head.²⁰ In the superscription of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, "They that are sanctified in Christ Jesus" is used as a synonym for "The Church of God which is at Corinth." Heredity, social position, race, nationality, count for nothing; the common relation to Christ is the determinative fact. "Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all and in all."²¹

Paul stood, if ever man did, for freedom and personality; but with equal unconscious greatness of soul did he stand for fellowship. Not only would this pastor of "all the churches" heal dissensions in the local congregation—"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?"—but with tireless endeavor would he influence these widely separated communities, from Jerusalem all the way to Rome, to stand together in Christian sympathy and coöperation. In writing to the churches, he would associate others with himself—Sosthenes, Timothy, Silvanus, or "all the brethren which are with me,"²²—to make the communica-

¹⁹Gal. iii. 28. ²⁰Rom. xii. 4; Eph. iv. 15.

²¹Col. iii. 11.

²²See Salutations of 1 and 2 Cor., Phil., Col., 1 and 2 Thess., Gal.

tion not merely that of an apostle or of any office-bearer or of any one person, but that of brethren to brethren, of Christians in one place to their fellow-Christians in another; he wrote circular letters to be read in different congregations;²³ made himself the bearer of salutations not only from individuals but also from churches;²⁴ urged the sending of gifts by the churches of Galatia, and even by those of Greece, to the needy Christians in Jerusalem;²⁵ stirred up one community to love and good works by calling attention to the example of others;²⁶ would have customs that obtained generally in the congregations to be taken as a guide in any particular congregation.²⁷ With what intense joy did he offer thanksgiving to God when the love of any one church was known to go forth to others!²⁸

Noteworthy, also, in two of Paul's letters is a certain informal grouping of the churches or the Christians of a whole Roman province. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, writing from Ephesus, he sends the greetings of all the churches of the province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief administrative center—"The churches of Asia salute you."²⁹ In the Second Epistle, he writes to all the Christians of the province of

²³Gal. i. 1, 2; Col. iv. 16.

²⁴2 Cor. xiii. 13; Rom. xvi. 16. ²⁵1 Cor. xvi. 1.

²⁶2 Cor. ix. 2, 3. ²⁷1 Cor. xi. 16.

²⁸Col. i. 4. ²⁹Chap. xvi. 19.

Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital—"unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in the whole of Achaia."³⁰ In like manner, he speaks of the Christian congregations of Judea as a sisterhood or unity—"the churches of Judea,"³¹ "the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus."³²

There is still a larger view to be taken. To whom are Paul's epistles addressed? To particular churches, in particular circumstances, with respect to particular needs, in reply perhaps to particular questions submitted to his decision, is the ready and familiar answer. But here is only a half-truth. Read the Salutation of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Paul . . . unto the Church of God which is at Corinth . . . with *all* that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ *in every place*, their Lord and ours."³³ It was not the vision simply of a particular church or group of churches that unveiled itself to the mind's eye of this letter writer, but the vision of "all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." It was not simply to "the Church of God at Corinth," or in Achaia, or at Ephesus, or in Asia, to which the inspired messages of this impassioned lover of Israel and Apostle of the Gentiles were sent: it was to the Universal Church. In spirit they were all ecumenical letters.

³⁰Chap. i. 1. ³¹Gal. i. 22.

³²1 Thess. ii. 14. Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. ³³1 Cor. i. 1, 2.

By every token, an object of Paul's unceasing prayer and effort was the vital brotherly relationship of all believers in Jesus Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether as individuals or as congregated bodies.

Was it that the people might come into supreme admiring coöperation with this great apostle's personal leadership and supremacy? That would have been to make them idolaters and himself an antichrist. Was it that they might be united in the common possession of an idea, a principle, a law, a transcendent truth? It was that they might be united in communion and congregation *in Jesus Christ*.

There were certain *means* of unity. The churches were all under the parental care and guidance of the same divinely commissioned apostles. They all acknowledged the authority of the same Old Testament Scriptures—when able, doubtless, possessing copies of them. They all received the same evangel of the Cross and Resurrection. They all had delivered unto them, in either oral or written form, words of the Master, with which there was no argument and from which there was no appeal.³⁴ But these great divine inheritances were after all only means: the uniting *power* was the new life in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. To be possessed of that, was to be one in spirit with all its other possessors.

³⁴Acts xx. 35; 1 Cor. vii. 6, 10; ix. 14; xi. 23.

V

At once the highest known form of being and the mightiest power acknowledged by the human heart is personality. No thing, however vast, nor any abstract idea, however sublime, can for a moment enter into competition with it. Persons we are, and by persons must we be enlightened, educated, inspired, and ruled. It is not infinity, absoluteness, eternity, in which our very life is lived, but the infinite, absolute, and eternal Person, the living God, who is the God not of the dead but of the living. The motive of all religion is in the cry: "My heart is athirst for God, for the living God. O that I knew where I might find HIM!"

Here is disclosed one of the characteristic life-forces of Christianity. Not in any ruling idea, but in the Man Christ Jesus, is the central and supreme power of human brotherhood. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw [will be drawing] all men unto myself."³⁵ Drawing men to him, Jesus is thereby drawing them into nearness, communion, association with one another.

Ethical philosophy, making a study of man as man, and finding in him under all conditions one and the same moral nature, tends to universalism. Stoicism, for example, in spirit a religion, was, unlike the popular pagan religions, neither ethnic nor national, but human. Seneca, speaking of

³⁵John xii. 32.

mankind, said: "We are members of one great body." Epictetus commended the person who justified himself for ministering kindly to a shipwrecked pirate on the ground that he had honored "not the man but humanity in his person." It would be hard to find truer ideas of human interrelations than such as these. Yet stoicism won very few followers, and even them it furnished with but a one-sided culture. Its great word was: "Trouble not thyself, the real world is within, and thou canst make that what thou wilt; external things touch not the soul, not in the least degree"—

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

At the same time, if the "clutch of circumstance" grew too severe, one might freely open the door of self-murder and pass out. "If the room is smoky, let us leave it," was one of the stoic's common sayings.

Stoicism, notwithstanding its universalism, sent forth no missionaries with hearts of love and tongues of flame. Because it lacked just that which was given to men in the Christian evangel; even the Divine Man, who was the visible wisdom, peace, and love of God, interpreted by the Spirit within the heart to those who receive his words. Compare Marcus Aurelius, "wisest of emperors and

holiest of pagan men," meditating in his tent amid the hardships and sickening horrors of war, with Saul of Tarsus illuminated by the revelation in him of the Son of God.

A common attraction to Christ was able to bring men together, as no power of rite or creed or moral system, nor even the revelation of God himself in Israel, had ever done, in communion with one another. Here is that Center of souls whence there went forth a new social spirit in the unloving ancient world. Ten thousand times has it failed, but some day the doing of its perfect work will be the answer to the interceding Saviour's prayer: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are."

VI

Shall we venture to think of this fellowship with the Saviour from the divine side? Here it is shadowed forth as a unifying love that passes all limitation and all knowledge. The Church is loved of Christ so as to make it one with himself. "Come hither," said the angel of the Apocalypse, "I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb." So he took the prophet-apostle away in spirit to a mountain exceeding high and showed him the Church of the redeemed—"the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God," and "made ready as a bride

adorned for her husband.”³⁶ Whatever, either of kindness or of injury, is done toward a bride has the bridegroom equally for its object; from him will an answer come; because his love has made them one together. The heavenly Bridegroom ever gives answer to whatever is done toward the Bride. “He that loveth his own wife loveth himself. . . . This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church.”³⁷

This has been spoken of as a metaphor under which “the *ideal* Church and its relation to Christ” is described.³⁸ But surely it is the actual Church, the Christian people, however imperfect and unworthy, and not an ideal, that Christ has loved and redeemed and thereby united in the oneness of love unto himself.

All through his own teachings does our Lord set forth, in varied forms of expression, this oneness of Christians in him. When he sent out the apostles the first time to preach the gospel of the kingdom, it was his word to them, “He that receiveth you, receiveth me.”³⁹ Setting a little child in the midst of those who anxiously inquired, Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? he said, “Whoso shall receive one such little child in my

³⁶Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 2. ³⁷Eph. v. 28, 32.

³⁸See Hastings, “Dictionary of the Bible,” Art. Church, III.

³⁹Matt. x. 40.

name, receiveth me.”⁴⁰ In his picture of the general judgment, he declares that whatever ministration is either done or neglected toward one of the least of his “brethren” is done or neglected toward himself.⁴¹ When Saul of Tarsus had “laid waste the *Church*,” the startling question of Christ, appearing in glory, was one concerning himself, whom Saul had never seen: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?” “Who art thou, Lord?” “I am Jesus, *whom thou persecutest*.”⁴² To touch the Church, whether with the hand of good will or of violence, is to touch the Soul of its soul, the Life of its life, the Christ whose love has made it one with himself.

Indeed, love to Christ is not an initiative but a response. “We love, because he first loved us.”⁴³ The Lover of the soul is beforehand with it, Alpha as well as Omega, first as well as last. In the days of his flesh he sought the disciples, sought companionship with them—“Ye did not choose me, but I chose you.” He is the same in glory, yesterday, to-day, forever; and the bond of perfectness that makes his multitudinous Congregation in all the world one together in him is no mere feeble response of theirs, but the creative and redeeming love wherewith he has loved them.

⁴⁰Matt. xviii. 5.

⁴¹Matt. xxv. 35-42.

⁴²Acts viii. 3; ix. 4, 5.

⁴³1 John iv. 19.

IV

AS VISIBLE AND RECOGNIZABLE

THE Church is a visible institution. Whether it be viewed from the divine side, as the kingdom of God embodied, or historically, as the Old and the New Israel, or from the human side, as the congregation of believers—men, women, and children—in Jesus Christ, one of its characteristic marks will be outwardness, visibility. It consists not of isolated but of associated members. It is a *congregational* communion. A distinction has been drawn in modern ecclesiology between the “visible” and the “invisible” Church. The two terms represent with sufficient clearness two great and unquestionable facts. The visible Church includes the Christians on earth at any one time, gathered into societies for worship and work; the invisible Church, the Christians of all ages, without reference to any outward association or government.¹ But the terminology is of doubtful

¹The distinction is recognized and defined in the “Westminster Confession,” Chap. XXV. “Luther first used the term ‘invisible.’ Zwingli first added the term ‘visible.’ . . . Zwingli was the only one among the Reformers who included the elect heathen in the invisible Church.” (Schaff, “History of the Church,” Vol. VI. 525, n.)

value. Is not that of the New Testament better? Instead of "invisible Church," let us say, the "kingdom of Christ," and instead of "visible Church," the *Church*.

Does this insistence upon visibility seem to any one as too external or unspiritual an idea? Let him ask whether an individual Christian is visible or invisible. May a man become and continue a disciple of Jesus secretly? It is certain that no such discipleship is contemplated in the New Testament: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven."² A "disciple," "brother," "believer," "saint," "Christian," any one of "the Way,"³ is one who not only believes in his heart but also confesses with his lips—and with his life.

But a Church is simply a congregation of these same Christian disciples. What its members are individually the Church itself is collectively. It is therefore a confessing, and thus an outward, audible, visible body. It must needs, by word and action, bear witness to the one Name, before all the world. In certain circumstances its testimony may excite bitter antagonism, and put its leaders and other members in peril of their life. The persecutor may "lay waste the Church" for its confession of faith.⁴ In other circumstances the friendship of the unregenerate world may encom-

²Matt. x. 32. ³Acts ix. 2; xxii. 4; xix. 9; xxiv. 14.

⁴Acts viii. 3.

pass it with the lure of still greater evils. No matter: amid whatever difficulties and dangers, Christ's Ecclesia is, according to the very fundamental laws of its life, a visible and confessing brotherhood. The name is applicable to no other.⁵

It is true that the churches of the apostolic age, like those indeed of all other ages, had their private, or secret, meetings. Sometimes, indeed, there has been a special reason for the closed door, namely, to shut out enemies: as, for example, just after the crucifixion of Jesus, "when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,"⁶ or in the days of "the hidden seed" of the Moravian Church, or the days of English Non-conforming Christians under the Conventicle Act of the seventeenth century. Here, however, was no organized secretiveness: like that, for instance, of the Eleusinian Mystery, or of any other secret society, ancient or modern. It was the simple avoidance of needless self-sacrifice. It was the covering of the light of truth from the violence of a passing storm, that it might escape destruction and soon shine forth with increasing power.

But there is no record in the New Testament of even this exercise of Christian prudence, after the Day of Pentecost.

Let us take the Epistles to the Corinthians as offering the most instructive account of church

⁵Cf. Litton, "The Church of Christ," p. 63.

⁶John xx. 19.

meetings during the New Testament period. It would seem from the picture here drawn or suggested that there were three different types of them, kept more or less separate from one another, two of which were for the Christians only and the third for whoever might be pleased to attend. There were meetings for the administration of discipline,⁷ for the election of messengers to sister churches,⁸ for the giving of letters of commendation,⁹ or for sending letters of inquiry:¹⁰ these, being business meetings, may be supposed, in the very nature of the case, to have sat with closed doors.¹¹

There were also social meetings, for the observance at a common table of a love feast and of the Lord's Supper, which likewise must have been family gatherings of the Church, with no outsiders in attendance.¹² It is certain, at least, that in the post-apostolic days not even catechumens were permitted, wether rightly or wrongly, to be present at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

But in addition to these there were meetings for *prayer and song and Christian testimony*, at which unbelievers were welcome. Here, in exhortation and prophecy, the evangelistic note was struck, and the unsaved won to Christian discipleship: "If all prophesy, and there come in one unbeliev-

⁷1 Cor. vi. 1-5.

⁸2 Cor. viii. 19, 23.

⁹2 Cor. iii. 1; xvi. 3. ¹⁰1 Cor. vii. 1.

¹¹As also meetings for the election of officers: Acts vi. 5. ¹²1 Cor. xi. 20-24.

ing or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed.”¹³

The *unbelieving* and the *unlearned*—what two classes of persons are here referred to? The unbelieving (*ἄπιστοι*) were doubtless pagans (or, in some instances, Jews) who had not yet been won to even a theoretical faith in Jesus Christ. The unlearned (*ἰδιῶται*) were apparently adherents of the congregation, interested, open-minded to the truth, but not yet received through baptism into the Christian brotherhood. “If therefore the whole church be assembled together, . . . and there come in men” of either of these two classes, they are more than welcome, and must be reached by the word of preaching. Let them fall down before the lightning stroke of heavenly truth and acknowledge that their secret sins and their imperative need of a Saviour have been disclosed as never before, and that the mighty God is indeed present in this little assemblage of his children.

Not only, then, was there the single apostle or evangelist, in the synagogue and elsewhere, speaking the word of life to all the people; and not only did the private Christian in his daily life endeavor to win others to his Lord; but there was a public worship and preaching in the assembled church

¹³¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 23-25.

itself. With the door open to whoever might have ears to hear, the prayer and praise and evangelistic appeal of the Church of God, which was at Corinth, were uttered. And this church may be taken as a typical rather than an isolated instance.¹⁴

The idea of a church as other than a Christian congregation, witness-bearing and therefore visible, is not to be found in the New Testament writings.

I

Nevertheless there was no consolidation of the various congregations, by apostolic authority, under a single governing body. So far as we have any evidence, none of them were ever thus united. The government was that of independent congregations, like the government of the Jewish synagogues, with the added supervision of the apostles and their fellow itinerant ministers.

Upon this apostolic supervision of the first Christian churches, it may not be amiss to linger a moment. It is best illustrated in the apostolate of Paul, and nowhere else so vividly as in his re-

¹⁴"The meeting described by the Apostle is not to be taken as something which might be seen at Corinth but peculiar to that city; it may be taken as a type of the Christian meeting throughout the Gentile Christian Churches; for the Apostle, in his suggestions and criticisms, continually speaks of what took place throughout all the Churches. 1 Cor. xiv. 33; xi. 16." (Lindsay, "Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries," p. 48.)

lation to the church in Ephesus¹⁵ and in Corinth.¹⁶ What was its character and significance? Not that of an authoritative lawmaker and ruler. Of an official authority received immediately from Christ to organize and rule the churches that would arise through their witness to the risen Christ, the apostles do not show any sign. In neither narrative nor epistle does it appear. Their supervision was that of the missionary pastor. It was the prototype of a ministerial guidance and government such as might well appear in any foreign mission field of to-day. Suppose the missionary evangelist, for example, to have gathered out of some pagan population one or more congregations of beginners in the Christian life. He will not leave these embryo churches to themselves. He will not turn them over at once to self-government. He will both continue to teach and exhort, and in many things will direct, superintend, and govern; and they, as his grateful but crude and untrained children in the gospel, will gladly have it so. Meanwhile it will be his endeavor to render them, as rapidly as possible, independent of his oversight and control. Such missionary pastors were Paul and his brother apostles of Christ.¹⁷

¹⁵Acts xx. 17-38; 1 Tim., *passim*.

¹⁶Acts xix.; 1 and 2 Cor., *passim*.

¹⁷Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," pp. 84, 85; Lindsay, "Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries," p. 144.

During the greater part of the second century the same general order prevailed: self-governing congregations, each with its own local ministry, and in addition an "irregular" itinerant ministry of prophets and teachers.

Whatever visibility may imply, it was not anciently seen to imply the combination of all local congregations, or even of any two of them, in organic union. Nor does it imply such intercongregational government in our own age—or in any other. However desirable, however obligatory, this form of government may be, at any time, it is far from being essential to ecclesiastic visibility. As well might it be held that the visibility of a family implies the organic union of all, or at least some, of the families of the world.

It was toward the close of the second century and during the next that the Catholic Church took form and appeared. What was the Catholic Church? Not an organization; for there was no supreme legislature or general executive officer. The center of unity for the local congregation (which by this time indeed had in some instances developed a few dependent congregations, foreshadowing the later "diocese") was the bishop; and the bishops, together with other representatives, in interchurch advisory councils, constituted a bond of unity. Besides this, there were other uniting forces. One was a common doctrinal belief, as represented in the baptismal formula, now

enlarging into the "Apostles' Creed." Another was a common recognition of the inspiration and authority of the sacred writings that were gradually crystallizing into the New Testament canon. All these coöperating forces—bishops, councils, creed, Scriptures—together with that wide-extended friendship of Christian with Christian, kept up through travel and letter-writing, that existed from the beginning of the gospel, were constructing, under the creative hand, as we must believe, of the Spirit of God, "that superb and world-subduing organization which we know as the Catholic Church."¹⁸ Yet, having no common government, either legislative or executive, it was not, properly speaking, an "organization." It was rather a very real though informal federation: the totality of Christian Churches in Asia, Europe, Africa, associated through councils, creed, Scriptures, correspondence, "letters of communion," and visitations, in more or less intimate fellowship and coöperation one with another.

All movements toward a universal or national or denominational *organic* form of ecclesiastical unity, whether permissible and praiseworthy or otherwise, are of later origin.

There came a time, indeed, in the history of Western Christianity, when the minds of men

¹⁸Moore, "The New Testament in the Christian Church," pp. 169, 170.

seemed unable to grasp the idea of Christian unity save as represented by one great visible personal Authority.¹⁹ But it was a simpler and grander vision that thrilled the heart of the early Church: All Christians, be they few or many, in whatever condition, in whatever land, in whatever age, are one indivisible brotherhood in Christ; and the congregations of this communion of saints, whether connected organically or not, and whether closely federated or not, are the Catholic Church. Whence the vision came we know: that it will shine clearer and brighter, after its long, sad centuries of obscuraton, we may steadfastly believe.

II

As to the number of persons necessary to constitute a church, an answer may be found in Jesus' own words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Nor need this little gathering be the only one, or the chief, of such assemblies, in the community. People may be regularly gathered together in Jesus' name, here and there, in the city or even in the rural neighborhood, with no restriction on the number of assemblies, except those very powerful restrictions imposed by good judgment and the spirit of fellowship and brotherly coöperation in Christ the one Lord.

¹⁹Bryce, "The Holy Roman Empire," Chap. VII.

Is not this indicated in the references of the apostolic epistles to house churches? "Greet the church," says Paul to the Romans, "that is in their [Priscilla and Aquila's] house."²⁰ So in other passages: "Salute . . . Nymphas, and the church which is in his house";²¹ "Paul . . . to Philemon . . . and to the church in thy house."²² It seems evident that the groups or assemblies of believers, to whom these epistolary greetings are sent, were not the whole church in Rome or Laodicea or Colosse to which the epistles themselves are addressed. They were little companies that met together in the houses of certain Christian people, who, like the man bearing the pitcher of water, to whom Jesus directed Peter and John, might have "a large upper room furnished" in which Christian disciples were invited to meet, and the unseen Master in the midst of them. But these, too, are called by the very name that Jesus used when he declared, "I will build my Ecclesia." They, as well as the whole body of the faithful in their respective cities, are "churches."²³

In fact, even the principal assemblage (if there was one) in a city must also have met in some private house; for there could hardly have been any

²⁰Rom. xvi. 5. ²¹Col. iv. 15.

²²Philemon 1, 2. Cf. Acts xii. 12; Rom. xvi. 14, 15; 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

²³Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. Church (C.).

other meeting place, ordinarily at least, at its disposal. Not until about the beginning of the third century do Christian houses of worship appear.²⁴ Prior to this time, all churches, with here and there an exception,²⁵ must have been house churches. Even the congregation of Cyprian, the powerful bishop of Carthage, in the middle of the third century, had no church edifice in which to worship.

The idea of a church in a dwelling house, though somewhat strange no doubt to most minds in our day, is not unfamiliar to others. In many a rural community of our own land sermons have been regularly preached, souls saved, congregations gathered and organized, prayer meetings held, sacraments administered, in the homes of the people. Indeed, the house congregation has had a goodly history. It dates back to the tent of the Hebrew patriarchs.²⁶ Its appearance in the early days of Christianity was so simple and inevitable as to

²⁴The first known reference to church edifices is said by patristic scholars to be found in the following passages in the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria (d. 220 c.): "And if sacred (*τὸ ἱερόν*) has a twofold application, designating both God himself and *the structure raised to his honor*. . . . For it is not now the place but the assemblage of the elect that I call the Church. This temple is better for the reception of the greatness of the dignity of God." (Bk. VII., c. 5.)

²⁵Acts xix. 9. ²⁶Gen. xii. 8; xviii. 19.

need no explanation. We see our Lord teaching the assembled people in private houses,²⁷ and eating the Passover with the Twelve in the guest chamber a friend had offered him.²⁸ After the Ascension, the Eleven and other disciples assemble in "the upper chamber" (was it the same as that in which they had eaten the Last Supper with their Lord?) for united prayer;²⁹ and it was here, we have reason to believe, that the tongues of fire descended upon them—Pentecost, marking the birthday of the Church of the New Covenant, came to the circle of prayer in the upper room. The Pentecostal converts not only continue with one accord in the Temple, but meet for worship "at home," breaking bread in communion with their ever-present Lord and with one another.³⁰ Simon Peter, delivered from prison, makes his way to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, "where many were gathered together and were praying."³¹ It was in an upper chamber in Troas that the little company of Christians were met together "to break bread," when "Paul discoursed with them," and prolonged his speech until midnight.³² Thus it came most naturally to pass that the churches were housed in the homes of the believing people, and so continued for several generations.

It is the effort of Christian scholarship to see

²⁷Mark ii. 1, 2. ²⁸Luke xxii. 11-13. ²⁹Acts i. 13, 14.

³⁰Acts ii. 46.

³¹Acts xii. 12.

³²Acts xx. 7.

them, both externally and internally, at least in some good measure, *as they were*—not as perhaps it is fancied they may or must have been.

III

It is impossible, in this connection, to avoid the question, How may a church be recognized as such? what are the notes of an ecclesia of Jesus Christ?

It must be understood that the word is here to be used in the New Testament sense—if this can be ascertained. Any other use of it would be arbitrary and confusing. Therefore, whatever effort is necessary must be made, to rid one's mind of any merely denominational or post-scriptural associations which may now attach to the word.

(1) First, then, as to *creed*. A church is a congregation of believers in Jesus as the Christ, the Divine Saviour and Lord. "Upon this rock I will build my Church."

Now any great spiritual truth, or even the believer in it, might fittingly be called a rock to build upon. Belief in the one true and living God, or, to use again the concrete term, the believer in him, might be expressed in this same strong metaphor. But it was not upon such beliefs, nor upon such believers, that Jesus would build his ecclesia. The question which he had just asked the Twelve was concerning a human person, even concerning the Speaker himself: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" The answer was, "John the Bap-

tist, . . . Elijah, . . . Jeremiah, . . . one of the prophets." None said, The Messiah. "But who say ye that I am?" And it was when Peter replied, notwithstanding the general unbelief, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," that Jesus declared that here was a very foundation stone of his household of faith.³³ It must be Christ-confessing disciples that constitute the Congregation of the Christ.

What did Simon Peter mean by this confession? It cannot be forgotten that, notwithstanding the revelation he had received from the Father in heaven, this first of the apostles knew very poorly the significance of the holy name which he spoke. What was the Christ? He was not recognized even in this great confession as the Man of Calvary, who should suffer unto death for the sin of the world, and be declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee."³⁴ But the larger faith lay potentially in the faith that Peter had confessed. He was ready to receive from the Father of Jesus the completer revelation of the cross and the resurrection, when these should be given. He did both receive it and proclaim it with power to others: "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assured-

³³Matt. xvi. 13-18.³⁴Matt. xvi. 22.

ly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.”³⁵ That was Peter’s confession of the Christ.

That it was equally the common confession of the churches which forthwith began to be gathered, in various places, is indisputable. It would seem to be impossible, with an open New Testament in one’s hand, to conceive of the first Christians following the crucified Jesus as merely a teacher and saint, even though wisest and saintliest of all, or as one who had died and, like other men, was still lying in his grave. Trusting in his name for the remission of sins, they confessed him as their risen Saviour and Lord.

Not less than this, then, may be taken as the credal contents of the word, when Jesus or the apostles speak of the “churches,” or of the “Church.”

(2) As to *spiritual life*. There must be the beginnings of personal salvation. Not perfection of Christian character, nor the full assurance of faith—far from it. That would be to refuse a child admission into the home, because it had not reached the stature of manhood. “Him that is weak in faith receive.”³⁶ But through repentance and faith toward God in Jesus Christ, the new life must have begun.

This will be evident, when it is remembered

³⁵Acts ii. 32, 36.

³⁶Rom. xiv. 1.

that a church is, first of all, not an organization nor even a congregation, but a Christian communion, and that such a communion is impossible without something of the inner Christian life in all who enter it. Only those who *have in common* can commune. Here is the principle of "a regenerate church membership."

Accordingly we read that "the Lord added to them day by day those that were *being saved*."³⁷ True, all who were numbered with the confessing brotherhood were not of this genuine type. No less truly of the new theocracy than of the old might it have been said, "All are not Israel who are of Israel." Even under the ministry of the apostles, a Simon Magus was received into church membership, and soon afterwards shown to have "neither lot nor part in this matter."³⁸ "They went out from us," says the Apostle John concerning the antichrists, "because they were not of us."³⁹ "False brethren,"⁴⁰ the Apostle calls certain intriguing church members of his day. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead," was the word of the Lord to church members in Sardis. These, not being of the Church, were never in any vital sense *in* it—like the lifeless branch, which is only mechanically connected with the tree, or like the unqualified and idle matriculate, who is only a nominal part of the student body. Were

³⁷Acts ii. 47. ³⁸Acts viii. 18-23.

³⁹1 John ii. 19. ⁴⁰2 Cor. xi. 26; Gal. ii. 4.

none such as they, church member and Christian would be convertible terms; were all such as they, there would be no Church.

(3) As to *ordinances*. There must be the ministration of the gospel, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. It is through the ministration of the gospel—not indeed necessarily in the primitive time by an apostle, nor in any time by a formally appointed minister, but by whoever may speak a word of true Christian testimony—that a church is gathered, instructed, and sanctified.⁴¹ It is by baptism, the visible sign of regeneration, that the believer in Christ makes his confession of faith and enters into the outward fellowship of his brother believers.⁴² It is in the Lord's Supper that Jesus brings to Christians' remembrance, under symbols of his own choosing, his sacrificial sufferings and death, and offers himself as the Living Bread of the soul.⁴³

These all are institutes of Jesus; and the New Testament knows no church without them.

But if the question be asked, whether baptism and the Lord's Supper are necessary to the Christian life in the same sense as the gospel itself and

⁴¹Mark xvi. 15; Acts ii. 41; Rom. x. 14; Eph. v. 26; Col. iii. 16; James i. 21.

⁴²Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Acts ii. 41; viii. 12, 36; ix. 18; Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 27f.

⁴³Matt. xxvi. 26-29 (with parallel passages); Acts ii. 46; 1 Cor. xi. 20-29.

the faith of the heart in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, the answer must be, that they are not. No outward sign is necessary in the same sense as the inner reality. One may easily imagine the case of a company of true Christian believers in circumstances where the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are not available. Suppose them, for instance, to be Baptists in belief, unable to accept any mode of baptism except immersion as valid, and so situated that the administration of the ordinance in this form is impracticable; or suppose them to be the unbaptized converts of the early Methodist evangelists, brought into "United Societies" in which the Lord's Supper was not administered; or suppose them to be Friends, conscientiously walking in the light of Christ, as they are able to receive it, but believing the sacraments to have been intended only for the age in which they were given, while the Spirit's baptism and the spiritual participation in the Lord's Supper are the only perpetual baptism and Lord's Supper in this dispensation of the Spirit. Are these, then, to be denied the Christian name? Few, if any, believers in the Jesus of the Evangelists, the Christ of the Bible, would say so.

But shall they be known by the *Church* name? Adhering to the New Testament use of the term, we shall have to answer this question negatively. But this, too, may be said: The New Testament gives no evidence of having any such cases in

mind; and one may surely believe that according to its spirit, though not according to the letter, these congregated followers of Jesus Christ are also his churches. Undoubtedly a willful rejection of any ordinance of Christ would involve the relinquishment, on the part of a religious body, of the title of *church*; but it would equally involve the relinquishment, on the part of an individual, of the title of *Christian*.

IV

A question may arise as to how serious must be the errors in the creed or observances of a religious denomination or a local religious society to preclude its right to be called a church of Christ. Or, to take a particular case, here is a congregation of the followers of Rome. They profess the dogmas of satisfaction for sin by good works, baptismal regeneration, priestly absolution, mariolatry, papal infallibility, transubstantiation. To them the Church is a self-perpetuated, ruling hierarchy, performing ceaseless miracles of salvation at the font and the altar, and so imparting the grace of God, through certain prescribed forms, that those who come within the ecclesiastic inclosure and those only are made Christians. Shall their strange priestly organization be called a church because of what Christian truth they do hold and what Christian character and experience they represent, or

shall they be denied such a title because of fundamental errors?

It is necessary here to recur to the distinction between church and ecclesiastical organization. In the New Testament, not only is no particular form of organization set forth as essential to the existence of a church, but organization itself is not set forth as thus essential; unless indeed it be that purely charismatic type of organization in which God-given gifts are used by their possessor for the common good, and so recognized by the Christian assembly.⁴⁴ A church is essentially a congregation only, not a formal organization. It is a visible fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ, the Divine Teacher, Saviour, and Lord. Given such a fellowship, and—whatever forms of government may soon appear to be *practically* necessary—nothing else is essential to the Christian Church idea.

It is in explanation of his announcement of the highest possible powers as belonging to an ecclesia—those, namely, of so judging as to have their judgment ratified in heaven and of so uniting in prayer as to receive whatever they ask—that Jesus declares, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”⁴⁵ Gathered together in Jesus’ name, and Jesus himself in the midst—it is that, without re-

⁴⁴1 Cor. xiv. ⁴⁵Matt. xviii. 20.

spect to any legal organization, that constitutes an ecclesia of the New Covenant. Organization must, indeed, make a church stronger and more efficient, but is not needed *to make it a church*. However necessary to the well-being, it is not necessary to the being (*esse*) of the Christian congregation.

Therefore, when inquiry is made concerning any denominational organization, be it sacerdotal or evangelical, historic or modern, Is this, according to the New Testament idea, a church?—the answer must be, So far as the society in question is a denominational, or legal, organization, the New Testament knows nothing about it, one way or the other. But so far as it embraces, within the limits designated by its legal title, people who meet together, even though it be in companies of only two or three, for fellowship in Jesus Christ, it represents a number of local churches. And when all these are held together in the mind, they are seen to make up one larger church; just as when all such groups in all ecclesiastical denominations are thus collectively considered, they make up the universal Church as it exists in the world to-day. This present and world-wide Ecclesia is the ideally united congregations of Jesus Christ.

Such an answer, I am well aware, will be regarded by some readers as more nebulous than clear-cut. Complaint will be offered that it does not state in precise terms how much imperfection, either in the way of excess or defect, in creed, ob-

servances, or conduct, shall be taken as necessary to exclude a company of professed disciples of Christ from the right to the New Testament title of a church.⁴⁶ The same objection, however, would lie against the attempt to decide concerning each individual church member whether he be a Christian or not. What is it, according to the teaching of the gospel, to be a Christian? A satisfactory answer may at once arise to one's lips; but when it is asked, in certain particular cases, Is this or that man a Christian?—no one need feel ashamed to acknowledge hesitation or ignorance. As with the Christians of the churches, so with the churches of the Christians. The general principle of discrimination is plain enough, but the application of it to every case that may arise—such knowledge is high, we cannot attain unto it.

“Howbeit the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord, depart from unrighteousness.”⁴⁷

May this word of mingled confession and criticism be permitted? Men think too meanly of themselves; and the result is personal pride. Unappreciative of those common powers and possibilities in which their real greatness consists, the very image of God himself on the soul, they glorify

⁴⁶Cf. Ladd, “Principles of Church Polity,” p. 12.

⁴⁷2 Tim. ii. 19.

some accident of personal appearance or social position, or some gift of intellect, that differences them from other people, as if to find their very self in that. After a similar manner, Christian ministers and people are prone to think too meanly of their churches; and the result is church pride. Unmindful of the supreme greatness of the one Congregation of the God and Father of Jesus Christ, whose names are written in heaven, and overestimating denominational peculiarities, they are ready to profess, "The Covenant people are we," and to despise others. It is a deep degradation when arrogance usurps the seat of love.

II

FORMS AND RELATIONS

“Unchanging principle as the spirit, but a certain body of forms which it may be principle or expediency either to break or to keep,—such is the relation of spirit and form in the true Church polity.”—*George T. Ladd.*

“It is not religion to employ force in religion.”—*Tertullian.*

“To know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have
done.”
—*Milton.*

“Concerning the bonds of unity, the true placing of them importeth exceedingly. There appear to be two extremes: for to certain zealots all speech of pacification is odious. ‘Is it peace, Jehu?’ ‘What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.’ Peace is not the matter but following and party. Contrariwise, certain Laodiceans and lukewarm persons think they may accommodate points of religion by middle ways, and taking part of both, and witty reconcilements, as if they would make an arbitrament between God and man.”—*Francis Bacon.*

I

ECONOMY OF FORCES: ORGANIZATION

EVERY assembly has a tendency to become an organization. For this is simply to say that the life forces that constitute it tend to take orderly directions for the sake of greater effectiveness.

Though it be the case of a mere temporary assembly, meeting once and dissolving forever, this is true. Supposing it to have on hand business of serious importance, it will elect a president and other officers, and observe certain rules of procedure; in a word, it will "organize." But if regular meetings are to be held, and an association or community formed which shall exist as such even when not actually convened, much more may organization be expected to occur. It must occur, unless the weakness and waste of confusion are lawful. Its analogue in physiology is differentiation of function, in industry the division of labor.

I

Imagine a score of persons, all unknown to one another, cast upon an uninhabited island,

Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

Each pursues his own course and contrives to

keep himself alive. But one day each is somehow made aware of the existence of the others. Immediately they are drawn together by the desire for human companionship. Simply as social beings they associate. It is a matter not of calculation but of instinct.

This companionship, however, also proves physically beneficial. It strongly suggests to the company how to interact so as to become larger producers of wealth. Let all agree to work together, each doing the tasks for which he is best fitted, correlating his line of activity all the while with those of his companions; and in this way each will receive a larger product from his labor than if he were working alone. Thus arises organization for the sake of coöperation, that each man may be personally benefited.

Nor is self-love the only motive. Good will also exerts an influence. Each worker gives as well as receives, and is glad to do so.

Indeed, a still larger altruistic motive may become operative. Apart from any good which they shall gain for themselves, these islanders would like to improve and perfect the country. They say one to another (it may at least be imagined), Let us cwork with the Creator in the making of the world; we are men; therefore, for the sake of our fellows who may come and be united with us, for the whole world's sake, let us subdue the land and make it fruitful and good. This purpose,

equally with that of mere personal and mutual benefit, would call for organization.

Here, therefore, to begin with is instinctive association; and then organization, with first an egoistic and secondly an altruistic motive—three successive stages of social progress. And the very same are seen in the actual world around us. Association everywhere; egoistic organization, as in an industrial establishment, or in the great institution of civil government, for the good of the participants; benevolent organization, as in the case of a scientific or an educational or a philanthropic society, for the advancement of some form of human well-being.

And thus, incomparably greatest of all benevolent institutions, appears the Church of Jesus Christ. In its essential idea a communion and congregation, it inevitably develops into an organization, for the good of its own members indeed, but also and always for coöperation under the larger and supreme motive of the whole world's salvation.

Note the inevitableness of this development, as illustrated in the New Testament. It is shown incidentally in one of Paul's words to the Corinthians: "If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?" There were difficulties between church members, that needed to be somehow arbitrated: who should be chosen as arbitra-

tors? Not heathen courts, said the apostle-pastor, but some Christian man, and he not the least worthy but the wisest in the church: "Is it so that there cannot be found among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?"¹ Even in this infant Christian society there was demanded a court of arbitration, as an *organ* of peacemaking among the brethren.

Not only the office of judging, but other offices of equal or greater importance would be demanded. There were men, also, fitted by gifts from God to fill them. They would use their gifts, as opportunity offered, and be recognized by the congregation in such offices. Here are men sent forth by Christ himself as his witnesses, to disciple all nations: let that be their high and peculiar function. Here are men gifted to teach the way of the Lord in the congregation: let them be the acknowledged teachers, while others take the place of hearers and learners. Here are men of wisdom and approved integrity to take charge of moneys contributed for the relief of the poor: let them be appointed to that office. Here are men better endowed than others in the congregation for the exercise of discipline and government, and they too are needed: let them be set apart as presby-

¹1 Cor. vi. 4-6.

ters. All Christians may take part in worship, in bearing testimony, in giving, in numberless good works: let the opportunity be provided for them. So it was that the first congregations of Christian people began, under divine guidance and inspiration, to be organized. "First apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."²

Evidently there was nothing here suggestive in the slightest degree of conventionalism or artificiality. What does appear is the economy of spiritual power. Let each devote himself to the work which he is best fitted for, that the welfare of all may be promoted—such is everywhere the economic requirement. It is shown in the word of the apostles in Jerusalem, when they asked to be relieved of the supervision of the daily ministration to the poor, which they had undertaken for a church not yet organized: "It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word."³ And if any one shall inquire as to the source and primal authority of this economy, the answer is given with

²1 Cor. xii. 28. ³Acts vi. 2-4.

the utmost distinctness by the great leader on whom, more than on any other, rested the care of the widely separated churches: "God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."⁴ He is the God of life; and life must move along the lines of law.

It should also be noted that out of the spiritual gifts (*charismata*) bestowed upon the apostolic churches, there arose two orders of service: namely, what may be called the prophetic ministry and the ministry of government. Of the first order were apostles, prophets, and teachers; of the second, bishops, or presbyters, and deacons.

It was the ministry of government that constituted the formal, or legal, organization of the churches. And it has never ceased to be.

Moreover, from the very beginning the two orders have tended to coalesce in the same persons. For example, just as in the first century it was desirable that the bishop-presbyter should be "apt to teach," laboring "in the word and in teaching,"⁵ so in the twentieth century, the pastor, rector, bishop, elder, preacher in charge, priest—by whatever name the chief minister of a congregation or of a number of congregations may be called—is to be preacher and teacher no less than ruler in the Church.

⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 33. ⁵ 1 Tim. iii. 2; v. 17.

II

Numerous and widely different have been the forms of ecclesiastical organization. They were somewhat different in the apostolic age—marked by similarity rather than sameness. Even the later dominant ideal of Catholicism found it difficult to secure an absolute uniformity. If created, would it not have been more a “dead work” to be regretted than an organ of life? But that which we have now to note is the fact of organization: its forms may be studied—in some later book, I hope.

Suffice it to say that the polity of the Church as it has risen, grown, varied, strengthened, persisted, cast off impediments and corruptions, from the beginning, or as it exists to-day, could not have been foreseen, even in outline, by any mind of the first century.

Supposing a student of the New Testament—say, some converted Hindoo or Chinaman—without any knowledge of the Churches of Christendom and their constitutional history, to be asked what forms of organization have been taken by them, there cannot be the least doubt of his inability to answer the question. Could he tell what forms ought to have been taken? The teaching of the New Testament on church polity—it is a point where opinions will differ, and controversy find its age-long opportunity.

The two most antagonistic conceptions are the papal and the congregational.

According to the claim of the papacy, the Church is a single visible body throughout the world. Its authority both to teach and to govern is centered in one man, the Bishop of Rome. Laymen are entitled to no part in ecclesiastical government: bishops and priests are the rulers, under the supreme and indefeasible authority of the Vicar of Christ. This is the Lord's own will and appointment. Those, therefore, and those only, who live in connection with the See of Rome are members of Christ's Church.

To the Congregationalist this is an utterly incredible conception. But not only so: he is unable to recognize any proper ecclesiastical authority whatsoever outside the local church. According to his belief it is the will of Christ that the universal Church should be made up of self-governing congregations; it was so in apostolic times, and should be so forever; the power of government has been committed of God to the people; all church officers are to be appointed by them, and as their representatives; churches, it is true, ought to form associations for the sake of conference and coöperation, but in no case for the sake of authoritative control; each congregation is directly responsible to Christ for its own government.

Between these two extremes, which, if it were

a matter of civil government, would both be notable for their simplicity and primitiveness, are two other ecclesiastical types—the presbyterial and the episcopal.

Presbyterianism does not conceive of the Church as consisting of independent and self-governing congregations, but as a larger whole consisting of separate congregations, and under a compact representative general government. It has developed, indeed, a graded system of governing bodies, from that over the local congregation to that of the presbytery, which exercises jurisdiction over a number of congregations, and that of the synod, which exercises a still wider jurisdiction, to that of the General Assembly, which is supreme over all. But in none of these governing bodies do the people appear personally. They appear only in the person of their representatives, the presbyters. These presbyters they elect as rulers in each congregation; and with this vote their part in church government, whether congregational or general, begins and ends. Elected presbyters alone legislate and bear rule.

Episcopacy would divide the ecclesiastical territory into districts, or dioceses, and place over each, as its supreme ruler, a bishop. No one bishop possesses any inherent authority over another. All are equal: each is responsible to God only. Each is an ecclesiastical monarch, ruling alone in his little realm. As a matter of practical

expediency, bishops must come to some agreement among themselves, and may even submit to the oversight of an archbishop. Thus, to use again the analogous civic terms, their dioceses become a body of federated monarchies, and exemplify instead of violating the external unity of the Church. But there can be no bishop of bishops—no essentially higher authority, legislative, administrative, or judicial, than that of the simple bishop.

The papal, the congregational, the presbyterial, the episcopal—these are the four great types of church polity. It is not to be expected, however, that they shall always be found in their purity. Divers composite forms appear. Episcopacy especially—so great are its supposed advantages and at the same time so serious its supposed evils—may be found in greatly modified forms, under some of which it would be unwilling to acknowledge any close relationship with what may be taken as the historic, or Cyprianic, type.

Of none of these forms of organization, simple or mixed, could a Christian of the first century have safely predicted, This polity will arise, persist, and prevail; even as of none may a Christian of the twentieth century safely assert, This polity alone is divinely authorized.

III

But whatever may be one's ecclesiological views and preferences, it will be granted that the numer-

ous forms of Church organization are not forms only. Of none can this be true. They appear as embodiments not only of fellowship with Christ and of one another in him—which has the right at least to claim supremacy—but also of specific or denominational ideas, aspirations, principles. As truly as denominational creeds or liturgies do they express outwardly a truth of thought and feeling within. The papacy, for example, stands for the idea of order, external unity, authority; congregationalism, for the idea of freedom, brotherhood, that ultimate reality, *the person*, direct dependence on Christ as the Head of the Church. The one for solidarity, the other for individualism.

When the words, "The kingdom of heaven is within you," were quoted to Frederick Denison Maurice, "Yes, and so is the kingdom of England," was his reply. A misinterpretation, if intended to be interpretative of our Lord's great saying; but aptly suggestive of the genesis and the ground of every system of government on earth. For every one of them has formed itself and persisted in maintaining itself about ideas. Not indeed that these organizing ideas are always held in their intellectual and moral integrity. Far from it. They are often overstrained or corrupted. Authority may degenerate into tyranny, freedom into schism. And the particular form of government may tend either to foster or to repress the inner fault.

It is also to be borne in mind that outward circumstances have their share in the development of ecclesiastical polity.

These are the environment of the planted seed, affecting in this or that direction, for good or ill, the movements of the unseen life. Nothing can grow, neither seed nor idea, neither plant nor institution, *in vacuo*. Correspondences and communications must be established between the life force within and sundry things, influences, forces, in the world without. It is not to be expected, therefore, that a church's economy should show no marks of its historic conditions.

To take a palpable instance, the position of the city of Rome as the capital of the civilized world, the early and supposed apostolic origin of the church in that imperial "center and symbol of civil unity," the decline of the Empire, the barbarism and territorial greatness of the West,—all these things were favorable to the rise and development of the papal power. On the other hand, the growth of the national spirit in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries made against papal supremacy, and determined the formation of State Churches. And to take a very different instance, the lack of Christian discipline in the State Church of England gave occasion for the resurgence of congregationalism in the sixteenth century. But in all cases the formative principle is within; external conditions only determine

the times and modify the manner of its expression.

The formative principle is within: it may not be amiss to pause a few moments in emphasis upon this truth as illustrated in the earliest Christian congregations. They did not mechanically copy their form of organization from the synagogue.⁶ They did not copy it from the municipal governments or the beneficiary associations or the burial societies of the Græco-Roman world.⁷ It was not to be expected that they should; it would have been unreasonable and undivine. They had a life of their own, a distinctly marked individuality, a new and supernatural life, that called for its own forms of organization as a "body obedient to the soul's commands."⁸

Not only was the principle of communion, hence of congregation, and hence of organization—namely, fellowship with Christ and with one another in him—the Christian Churches' own pe-

⁶Advocates of the presbyterial form of government have sometimes made too much of the synagogical organization as determining that of the first Christian Churches.

⁷Dr. Edwin Hatch ("Organization of the Early Christian Churches") and others, following his lead, have certainly made too much of the formative influence of these societies of paganism upon ecclesiastical organization.

⁸Lindsay, "Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries," pp. 131, 132.

culiar principle; but the *method* of organization which they followed was also peculiarly their own. What was that method? As already indicated, it was to recognize and utilize the spiritual gifts imparted to Christian believers through the presence of the living Christ among them. Did any truly prophesy and teach? Let them be accepted as prophets and teachers. Did any show gifts of ministration to bodily needs, of admonition, of oversight and rulership? Let them serve in these capacities. Or, was the need of a certain service felt? Then let the congregation recognize that need and set apart to such service, either formally or informally, the suitably gifted men. In a word, the Spirit of God was looked to and trusted as, in the most real sense, the organizer of the Church. And obedience to its officers was obedience to those whom God himself had immediately called to their office. It was obedience to God.⁹

Now is this method to be regarded as suited to the apostolic age only, and hence long ago antiquated? In its essential idea it can never become

⁹This view is strongly presented in Sohm's "Kirchenrecht," as interpreted by Walter Lowrie in "The Church and Its Organization," pp. 141-150. But the author goes too far in his insistence that the present-day organization of the churches (implying, unless I fail to catch his meaning, that in no instance has it any such spiritual and charismatic basis) is directly contrary to the nature and essence of a Christian church.

antiquated. Those who have ears to hear may still "hear what the Spirit saith to the churches"; for he is in the midst of them now as truly as in the beginning. The Son of Man still walks among the seven golden lamp-stands, holding the seven stars, which are the "angels" of the seven churches, in his right hand; and his voice may still be heard as the voice of many waters.¹⁰ He may ever be trusted to endow, enable, and call his servants for the work he would have them do. Therefore it must be the Church's endeavor to choose for its officers those whom he has chosen and empowered, and to honor them as his representatives. Let an ancient formula, even yet regularly and widely observed, stand as a witness, notwithstanding its painful abuses, of the Church's recognition of the one perfect method of forming its offices of government and of teaching: "Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?"¹¹

If it be objected that this is a faith that may easily degenerate into superstition, that some mere unmeaning, outward circumstance or subjective fancy may be taken as the very voice of God, the objection must be frankly admitted. The danger

¹⁰Rev. i. 13-15.

¹¹"Form of Consecrating Bishops," in the Ordinal of the Methodist Episcopal Churches. Cf. the original form as used in the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church.

to which it calls attention is both real and of serious import.¹² But it is the same danger that attends upon the acceptance and practice of all spiritual truth. Other voices may indeed be followed as the voice of the indwelling Spirit of God; for the sense of moral and spiritual discernment, like the intellectual judgment, may be defective. Nevertheless we "believe in the Holy Ghost" even more trustfully than "in the Holy Catholic Church."

IV

Let us pause to mark the not unfamiliar distinction between organism and mechanism. In the case of an organism—say, any plant or animal—the creative and controlling force is from within. It is that inscrutable mystery, life. All that it asks is material to work upon, under suitable conditions. These requirements met, every living germ makes its own body. It will put forth the various appropriate organs, diffusing itself through them all, and thus holding them together in coöperation and unity. But in the case of a mechanism the controlling force is from without. A machine left to itself is helpless and worthless: it can do nothing. The clock must be wound up by some human hand, else there is no marking of time by the "hands" on the dial. The locomotive

¹²Moore, "The New Testament in the Christian Church," pp. 238, 239.

engine must be waited upon with regular supplies of coal and water, and adjusted by the engineer to the train and the track ; else it is only a pile of iron.

Now an organization may be an organism. That is to say, it may create, in its process of formation, the very offices which its needs demand, and support them with its own common life, as truly as the plant puts forth and sustains root, branch, leaf, blossom.

But organization is likely to include more or less of mechanism. This will occur when the forms of government and methods of procedure are imposed from without, or have served their day and are now antiquated and outgrown, or for any reason do not express the present mind and needs of the society. And the fact that here concerns us is, that Christian churches, like any other societies, are not pure and perfect organisms. The unfit, the inexpressive, the mechanical, frequently appear in their economy.

It is possible, however, for that which in itself is mere mechanism to serve as an instrument, if not in the strict sense an organ, of life. A pen is but a mechanical device ; yet the pen in the hand of a skillful chirographer becomes, as it were, a part of the hand itself. The grafting of a plant is a mechanical process. The pippin tree, left to itself, would produce only pippins perpetually. But ingraft with knife and bandages into one of its

branches a scion off some other apple tree: it will be accepted, supported, incorporated, and made to bear not pippins indeed but some other sort of apples. So likewise will a living church utilize even its mechanism and express its organic life through the less vital forms of its organization. As it may quicken with a new life credal and liturgic forms that do not perfectly represent its present beliefs and spirit of worship, so with governmental forms.

If there must be something of the mechanical, a bit of machinery, let it be vivified—as in the prophet's vision by the river Chebar, where “the spirit of the living creatures (margin, spirit of life) was in the *wheels*.”¹³

Sometimes an office whose original function is no longer demanded finds a somewhat different work to do for which there is a present demand: as, for illustration, when the deacon, originally an officer of finance and care-taker of the poor, becomes in episcopally governed Churches chiefly an assistant in congregational worship and a probationer for the presbyterate; or when in early American Methodism the presiding elder, appointed as an administrator of sacraments in pastoral charges without ordained pastors, becomes a general superintendent of the interests and affairs of his district.

No one of course will contend, however, that

¹³Ezek. i. 21.

a piece of ecclesiastical machinery must needs be perpetuated because of what good service it might be made to yield. In some cases the best use that can be made of a feeble or decadent branch is to cut it off the tree.

V

The Christian idea of organization, or office, has been set forth for all time in the New Testament, as that of service.

Another name for the highest officers is minister, or servant (*διάκονος*).¹⁴ To prophesy, to teach, to evangelize, to administer, to *rule*, is to serve. So the Apostle Peter, having exhorted the "younger" to "be subject unto the elder," immediately adds, "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another."¹⁵ *One another*—the elder serving the younger, who are subject to them, as well as the younger serving the elder, who have the rule over them. Any different conception is entirely foreign to the spirit of the New Testament. Of men like Diotrephes, who love "to have the preëminence"—prominent position for its own sake—it is written, "He that doeth evil hath not seen God."¹⁶

But let us not take any narrow or merely ecclesiastic view of this teaching. For what we have

¹⁴2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4. ¹⁵1 Pet. v. 5.

¹⁶3 John 9, 11.

here is only one large and luminous instance of a universal truth. All offices and occupations are for service. All are divinely intended for the common weal. This larger truth is fairly recognized with respect to what are known as the "professions" in contradistinction to the trades and mercantile pursuits. A physician or a teacher, for example, who practices his art simply for the money he can make out of it, is looked upon as unworthy of his calling. Every one may feel the ring of reality in the injunction of Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College, "Never teach immortal minds for money." Every one will speak disparagingly of a man who "makes a trade" of an art or profession. But in point of fact the trade, or manufacture, or mercantile business, is as truly for service as any other calling; and only in the Christian spirit of service can it be rightly pursued.

Shall there be office-seeking, then, in the brotherhood of Jesus' disciples? In 1 Tim. iii. 1, "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," there is something like candidature for a place in the presbytery suggested. But it is also suggested that any desire for a presbyter's place must be unselfish. It must be that of a seeker of "a good work."

Not official position but spiritual gifts may be craved. Which spiritual gifts? Preferably those which are most edifying, most serviceable. These

are the "greater gifts."¹⁷ Hence the distinction, "Desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."¹⁸ For prophesying is more directly and richly "edification, and comfort, and consolation."¹⁹ Usefulness not prominence, service not promotion, is the law. "*Let all that ye do be done in love.*"²⁰

A man of this excellent spirit will be a worker already, diligently exercising, in any position, the gifts which he possesses. This will be a sign of fitness for rule and leadership; the absence of it would condemn the desire for office as an unholy ambition. In the apostolic churches, it was the workers that were acknowledged as rulers. "We beseech you, brethren, to know *them that labor among you* and are *over you in the Lord*, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love *for their work's sake.*"²¹ Concerning the household of Stephanus, who had "set themselves to *minister unto the saints,*" the exhortation is given, "that ye also *be in subjection unto such*, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth."²² It was service that made for rulership. Who shall be obeyed? The paradoxical church answer was, *Your servants.*

But out of the passion for prominence and au-

¹⁷1 Cor. xii. 31.

²⁰1 Cor. xvi. 14.

¹⁸1 Cor. xiv. 39.

²¹1 Thess. v. 12.

¹⁹1 Cor. xiv. 3.

²²1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.

thority, or out of the still baser passion for emolument, arises the office-seeker, spoiling God's order. The apostles knew, wrote Clement of Rome at a time when the last of the Twelve had but recently entered into rest, "that there would be strife over the name of the overseer's office."²³ So has it been more or less frequently, through many generations. Ungirded with humility, and too easily persuading themselves of the purity of their motives, men have sought, through doing and not doing, through speech and silence, their own official advancement. In not a few instances this ambition is gratified: those who seek find, and so have their reward. But it is not Jesus' way. It is the way of "the princes of the Gentiles."

"Do you serve in this parish?" it was asked a Puritan minister of the old time in New England. "Serve? I rule in this parish," was the reply. But surely it is not well that the spontaneous consciousness of the Christian minister should be that of ruling rather than that of ministering. Office is another name for opportunity. *Minister* means more than *rector*. Upon the heart of every office-bearer in Church or State, in all societies and corporations, the word should be written, Larger and more difficult service. In proportion as the mind of Christ becomes dominant, it will be so written.

What right has any man to hold wealth?

²³Epist. XLIV. 1.

None, save as he uses it for the good of the world. Nor has any man a right to hold office, save on the same condition. The people are not for the king, but the king for the people. Of the two Antonines it has been said that they were the only Roman emperors that devoted themselves "to the task of government with a single view to the happiness of the people." But if among the nations of the earth the prevalent rule and administration is arbitrary and self-seeking, Jesus has said most distinctly that it shall not be so with those who are learning of him. The congregation is not for the pastor, but the pastor for the congregation. "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand in thy glory." "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all."²⁴

That is the royal life of humanity in its realized Idea. It is Jesus' way. It is the way of office-seeking and office-holding in the Church, because it is a law of the "glory" of Christ. To depart from it is to bow down and worship the world. From the beginnings of human history this law of love has been foreshown in the relation of teacher and pupil; for whence is the higher and larger service, from the pupil to the teacher, or from the teacher to the pupil? Still more divinely has it

²⁴Mark x. 37, 43.

been foreshown in parenthood, which is the crowning prophecy, in all natural relationships, of doing good and hoping for nothing again.

Inseparably connected with such service, because of the very innermost nature of love, is the spirit of self-sacrifice. "Grant us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand in thy glory." "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Whatever office-seeking is admissible in the Congregation of the Christ is that which is practiced, under no self-delusion and with no falsehood on the lips, in the spirit of the Cross.

II

CHURCH AND STATE: ANCIENT, MEDIÆVAL

INTO whatever region of the earth the Church may go, she will find herself in the presence of a political institution which, like herself, has been ordained of God for all men's good. No one can be received into her membership who is not already, and will not continue to be, included also in the jurisdiction of this other divine institution. In more or less close and delicate relations will appear the Church and the *State*.

That these relations should often have been extremely delicate and difficult is not a matter of surprise. Indeed, that the two institutions should have often failed to adjust themselves rightly to each other was antecedently much more than probable. For both are concerned about the interests of the same people at the same time; and while it is easy to say broadly that the one oversees men's spiritual life and the other their bodies and goods, it is by no means easy to discriminate at all points between the two jurisdictions. Steady and well-directed must be the hand that will undertake to divide this sphere into halves, and say, This is the department of care-taking for man as a citizen, and that of care-taking for man as a Christian.

When it is also remembered how often in the leaders of both Church and State unworthy or evil motives have appeared and a broad intelligence has been lacking, a further explanation is given even of the bitter controversies and bloody wars and woeful waste of human happiness, the scandal and crime of structural Christianity, that the politico-ecclesiastic problem has occasioned.

I

In ancient heathendom religion was tribal or national. The cults were such as had been authorized by the ruling power. Growing up as religious customs, they had crystallized into civil laws. A conquered people might be allowed to retain its own gods, or might be required to adopt those of its conqueror; and in this latter case the sense of hardship was lightened by the fact that its gods had shown themselves either unable or unwilling to preserve their devotees from defeat. But in any case the State held supremacy over all rites of worship. Especially in the earlier, or tribal, stage of national life, these rites were regarded as of the very highest public importance. First, last, and always, by prayers and offerings, the favor of the immortal gods must be secured. Religion was a principal, if not the principal, function of politics. Patriotism and the offices of piety were inseparable.

Turning now from pagan peoples to the de-

scendants of Abraham, we find, first of all, in the patriarch's immediate family, under his own tents, a household church.¹ Later, we see in Israel a theocracy.

Instead of saying that here religion was national, it were truer to say that the nation was religious. The Church so controlled and appropriated the State as to make the two one. So, the product which resulted was a Church State rather than a State Church. In accordance with laws civil and religious (to recognize a distinction which has since been made), given of God, must the lawgiver and the judges govern the elect people. In still later times, under the monarchy, both before and after the division of the kingdom, and notwithstanding the often prevalent idolatry, the theocratic idea still persisted. Jehoshaphat sent princes, Levites, and priests through all the cities of Judah, to teach the people out of the Book of the Law of Jehovah.² Josiah made a covenant with Jehovah, in behalf of the people, to put away idolatry, and celebrated a passover such as had never been kept "from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings."³ Such was the throne's relation to the religion of the land. No conception seems to have been formed, nor any revelation given, either of the State dominating the Church, or of two societies,

¹Gen. xii. 7; xviii. 19; xxii. 9.

²2 Chron. xvii. 1-9. ³2 Kings xxiii. 1-25.

a religious and a civil, Church and State, existing side by side. In some real though feeble and earthly sense, the king was viceroy of Jehovah, and Jerusalem "the city of the great King."⁴

Among the Jews of the Dispersion, as also in the home land under the rule of Persia or Syria or Rome, it was impossible that Church and State should be united. The true religion had to be maintained without the aid, or even against the will, of the sovereign. It must perpetuate itself in the empires of heathendom.

In these circumstances, it may be supposed, the Jewish mind would become familiarized with the idea of ecclesiastical independence of the State; and thus a certain preparation might be made for the independency of the churches of Jesus Christ, when these should be founded. Just as in Babylon the Church of Israel learned that it could live without temple or altar, so in Babylon and Palestine and elsewhere, for hundreds of years, it learned that it could live without either the patronage or the protection of the State. And the lesson would be passed on to the Church of the New Covenant.

Still the original idea was not abandoned: "the pattern showed in the mount" was the pattern still. So far as self-government was permitted, the law of Moses, though in later times overgrown and made of no effect by numberless trivial tradi-

⁴Matt. v. 35.

tions, was the statute book. In this administration of law, the remnant of the Covenant People were still disregarding of any distinction between the civil and the religious, the secular and the sacred. Their judiciary, alike in the local courts⁵ and in the Great Sanhedrin, dealt with all manner of offenses—debt, theft, robbery, assault, murder, blasphemy, faults of ritual, false prophecy; and sentences not only of excommunication, but also of corporal punishment, even the sentence of death, were pronounced.

During the troubled century of freedom under the Asmonean princes (142-63 B.C.)—freedom that was gained, by the sword of Judas “the Hammerer” and his brothers, themselves sons of a priest, for the sake of religious faith rather than of civil rights⁶—the form of government was more theocratic than ever. The throne and the priesthood were united: the ruling prince was the high priest—a priest-king.

Moreover, before the anxious eyes of the faithful through all these generations, there shone, like the starlight that throbs with prophetic longing to lose itself in the glory of the dawn, the precious hope of the Lord Christ’s perfected theocracy.

⁵Schürer, “Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ,” Div. II., Vol. I., pp. 151-154; Matt. v. 22; x. 17; Mark xiii. 9; Luke vii. 3.

⁶1 Mac. ii. 42.

II

Then that which was old and ready to perish vanished away, and the New Covenant was established. Jesus of Nazareth was born: the Word was made flesh. Not such as either prophet or people were fully able to foresee, but such as He was, even the Witness of the truth, Messiah came, and laid the foundations of the Christian Ecclesia.

It was not incorporated into the State, either as controlling or controlled, nor united with it in any form of alliance. It stood wholly separate and apart. Nor can we reasonably assume that this was due to the circumstances of the time—that if Israel had been a free and independent people, as, for instance, in the days of David, or even of the Asmonean princes, our Lord would have put his Church into organic relation with the civil government. The prophets had foretold that Messiah, when he appeared, should reign not through this or that king as his representative, but in his own person. Himself should reign personally. Jesus, in fulfilling, interpreted the prophecy. And this was the interpretation thereof: The lawgiver and sovereign of the soul, the Head of restored humanity, gathering together about his own person those who were of the truth and would hear his voice.⁷

The King of men, standing, accused and derided, before the Roman court, which represented

⁷John xviii. 37.

the judiciary of the civilized world, averred: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight"; "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above."⁸ Here, then, we may catch a glimpse of two great truths, as truth is in Jesus: first, Christ's kingdom is not to be established by force; secondly, the secular government is a divine ordinance.

Accordingly in the New Testament the Church is seen, in the person of its Founder and its inspired teachers, using as its one weapon the word of truth, and at the same time honoring the State as an institution of God, counseling obedience to its laws save where conscience toward God may forbid, claiming its protection, praying for its rulers.⁹ It is but the passionate accusation of unbelieving Jews and "vile fellows of the rabble" of Thessalonica, that Paul and his comrades "all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." Christians were loyal.

This same independent yet friendly attitude toward the civil government was maintained by the churches of the post-apostolic age. Certainly the Christians had at first neither the opportunity nor apparently the desire to form any alliance with the State. On the other hand, it was in vain that

⁸John xviii. 36; xix. 11.

⁹Matt. xxii. 21; Luke xii. 14; Rom. xiii. 1-7; 1 Pet. ii. 13-17.

their enemies accused them of disloyalty—except as their indifference to political office or failure to join in idolatrous worship might be so construed.¹⁰

The Empire had a religion of its own, of which the worship of the emperor became the universal feature. As the author of the Positive Philosophy dedicated a shrine to his deceased wife and worshiped in her the personification of the spirit of humanity, and as the Japanese have apotheosized their Mikado, so did the Romans in the first three Christian centuries worship in the emperor the personification of that great world power above which their hopes and aspirations were not wont to soar. The State, as embodied in a man, was their god.

Rome was tolerant of all the faiths of conquered peoples. Any region might practice its ancestral religion, though forbidden to proselyte outside its own boundaries. Even the Jews, who, unlike the other subject races, claimed for their religion absolute truth and universality, were permitted for the most part to worship the God of their fathers in peace.

But the case of the Christians was different. It

¹⁰“We pray, too, for the emperors, for their ministers, and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation.” (Tertullian, “Apology,” 39. Cf. “Apology,” 32; Justin Martyr, “II. Apology,” xiv.; Athenagoras, “Plea for Christians,” 3, 37; Eusebius, H. E. IV., 13, 26.)

is true, they seem to have been regarded at first as simply a sect of the Jews' religion. But as the separation between Church and Synagogue became more marked, Christianity could not but be recognized as a separate and distinct religion, in no sense representing a national faith. So, it was without legal sanction. Though tolerated, it must understand that it had no legal right to be.

Then, too, the Christians, confident of their faith as the world's one religion, were singularly aggressive, and were organizing and multiplying everywhere.

Besides, while not disloyal, they could not be described as patriotic. They cared little or nothing for politics. Like the Stoics, though of course from a different point of view, they were interested in the human rather than in the national idea.¹¹ They felt exceedingly doubtful as to the propriety of their holding civil offices. In fact, to discharge the duties of such offices, involved a recognition of the pagan rites, as, for example, in connection with the festivals and public games. It was not surprising, therefore, that Christians should stand

¹¹"They [Christians] dwell in their own country, but simply as sojourners. As citizens they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers." "Epistle to Diognetus" (A.D. 130 c.), c. V. Cf. Ramsay, "Church in Roman Empire," pp. 371-374.

aloof from civil affairs, and, though truly valuable citizens, expose themselves to the suspicion of being enemies to the emperor and the Roman people.

Hence the frequent attitude of the government toward them was one of hostility. It was the age of the Persecutions. In most cases local, separated also by peaceful intervals of about twenty years' duration, they were nevertheless conducted with Roman severity and persistence. Tests were rigorously applied, prominent among which was the demand to worship the statue of the emperor.¹² The State, in its endeavor to destroy, kept sifting the Church as wheat; and learned to its chagrin that the grain which endured the test had lost none of its vitality and fruitfulness.

III

Then, the great reversal of the Imperial religious attitude. It is the name of Constantine the Great that will always be taken as the chief sign

¹²"As for those who said that they neither were nor ever had been Christians, I thought it right to let them go, since they recited a prayer to the gods at my dictation, made supplication with incense and wine to your statue, which I had ordered to be brought into court for the purpose, together with the images of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ—not one of which things (so it is said) those who are really Christians can be made to do." (Pliny's "Letters to Trajan," 110 A.D.)

of this stupendous process of change. For while the mighty and illustrious emperor still wore the pagan title of Sovereign Pontiff, he also wished to be regarded as director in chief of the Christian institution. "God has made you," he said to certain bishops, "the bishops of the internal affairs of the Church, and me the bishop of its external affairs." Accordingly he not only tolerated the religion of Christ along with other religious faiths—"giving to the Christians and all others full authority to follow whatever worship any man has chosen"¹³—but provided for the support of the clergy, convened councils, and enforced conciliar decrees by the strong arm of the law. Other religions were still tolerated: Christianity was favored.

It was toward the close of this same century that by an edict of Theodosius the Great (380 A.D.) the term "Catholic Christians" was defined, and all non-Catholics ordained to "bear the infamy of holding heretical dogmas," and forbidden to assume the name of "churches." The offering of sacrifices to the gods was made a capital crime. Heresy, Judaism, and paganism were to be persecuted out of existence.

Now, did the "Bride of Christ" accept this reversal of the Imperial attitude from hostility to toleration, authoritative patronage, and "establishment," without protest or disturbance of con-

¹³Edict of Milan (313 A.D.).

science? She appears to have accepted it with grateful joy.

The bishops, as a class, had shown even at this early day, something of that disposition to come to a good understanding with the State that marked their administration in the Middle Ages. They had well begun to be what they afterwards came very decidedly to be—not recluses, nor reformers, nor prophets, but conservative administrators. They proclaimed no counsels of perfection, but brought down the spirituality of the gospel into such forms as could be laid hold of by unregenerate and worldly minds. They avoided needless offense, and tried to keep on good terms with the secular power. So, under episcopal leadership the Church applauded its incorporation, after the manner of the old paganism, into the Empire.

But the exultation was more jubilant than enlightened. The price paid for this type of the *pax romana* was too great. Persecution were far better than corruption: and corruption deep and widespread attended this first Christian national establishment.

Let us not indulge, however, in too severe criticism of the bishops and their followers. It did seem like an advantage (as in fact it was an immense advantage in some respects) that Christianity should have the sanction of the Roman government, which meant the respect and favor of the civilized world. Supposing, for example, that the

history of the union of Church and State for the last sixteen hundred years had not been written, and that the Empire of China should propose, like Constantine and his successors, to espouse the Christian religion, as against all others, it would doubtless seem to many fair and conscientious minds entirely reasonable to accept the offer. The churches of the fourth century, with all their disastrous mistakes, were by no means wholly depraved and unreasonable in consenting gratefully to become a State Church.

IV

Nor did this ecclesiastical subjection to the State prove to be a finality. Because, for one thing, it was not the idea of churchmanship that lay germinant, and ready at the first opportunity to clothe itself with power, in the papal theory. This theory, as it came to be disclosed, demanded the ascendancy of the Church over the State—a Church State, or theocracy, not a State Church.

And the circumstances of the time favored this more churchly idea. The Western Empire was now (say, at the close of the fifth century) a thing of the past. The Eastern Empire, with Constantinople as its capital, held little more than a titular sovereignty over the West, and received little more than a nominal allegiance from the Pope. In all Western Europe it was a chaotic, embryonic time, the breaking up of the old order, before the

modern nations had taken to themselves dignity and power. There was no real nation, no strong government, no enlightened administration of law. There were vast surging populations, ignorant and ferocious, yet rich in the elements of a noble manhood. And now in the midst of them, behold Christian Rome, inheritor not only of the commanding prestige of Imperial Rome but also of its extraordinary genius of administration—a center of order and authority. It represented, therefore, both the new Christian faith, which was to supplant the various forms of European idolatry, and that which all the better minds of the age were feeling after, the majesty of universal Law. The possession of the East must be foregone, but what an open door, though beset with terrible difficulties and dangers, in the West.

When, therefore, out of the clash and confusion of the earlier mediævalism, the modern nations began to emerge and take form, the papacy, which had stood all the time not indeed for nationality but for civilization and law, was unwilling that they should ignore its control. Had not Imperial Rome been ruler of the world? Much more let Christian Rome assert her supremacy, not alone over the churches but over the nations as well. Let it be done in the name of the unseen King of kings and Lord of lords. Let the whole world become one theocracy with the vicegerent of God on the throne.

Meantime (742-814 A.D.), a marvelous commanding figure had appeared on the scene. The founder of the Holy Roman Empire stood forth as not only the defender but also the chief ruler of the Church within his ever-widening dominions. He honored the Pope, indeed, as the spiritual head of Christendom; knelt before him to be crowned "Charles Augustus, Emperor of the Romans," and proclaimed "pious and peace-giving Emperor, crowned of God"; and as a reward received the powerful papal influence in consolidating and controlling his new Empire. But it was far from Charles's thought to acknowledge the civil supremacy of the bishop of Rome. He himself, in his own realm, was supreme over both civil and ecclesiastical affairs. He convened Church councils; introduced laymen (counts and barons) into them, contrary to the established order; appointed and deposed bishops; through a council over which he presided, condemned the decrees of the Second Council of Nice concerning image worship, although the Pope had given them his sanction; commanded all his subjects to take an oath to "do no treason nor violence toward the holy Church," but to live "according to their strength and knowledge in the holy service of God." Charlemagne accepted the theocratic idea and attempted to embody it in *himself*.¹⁴

¹⁴Hallam, "Europe During the Middle Ages" (fourth edition), pp. 16, 17.

In that rude age the modern striving of independent thought and research was unknown. People were not guided in their conduct by abstract principles, but overawed by personality and fact. Equality of rights and opportunities was undreamed of. Lawlessness, on the one hand, or subjection to the Iron Hand superstitiously regarded as the instrument of a supernatural Will, on the other, was the spirit of the age. Politically and religiously, it was the same spirit: men believed alike in the Holy Roman Empire and in the Holy Roman Catholic Church as part of the very constitution of the world, to be perpetuated unto the end of time.¹⁵

The papacy was prudent enough not to clash swords with the Emperor. And subsequently it derived an advantage from the dismemberment of the Empire under Charles's weak successors; for now it could undertake, as in fact it did, with a better prospect of success, to arbitrate between political contestants and subject princes to its control.

It was this theory of a universal theocracy that Pope Hildebrand determined to embody in his administration (1073-1085). Originating long before his day, it was applied by Hildebrand in a more clearly defined and absolute form than ever before. He distinctly claimed and attempted to

¹⁵Bryce, "Holy Roman Empire," pp. 52, 89-91.

exercise the authority to dethrone any king in Christendom, when, in his judgment, the interests of religion demanded it. Had not the incomparable Charles himself received the imperial crown from the hand of Leo the Pope? and was it not the accepted idea of the age that the relation of Church and State was to be likened to that of soul and body? Both could not be supreme; and surely the soul should rule the body rather than be ruled by it.

Hildebrand, failing, despite certain brilliant and successful strokes, in his gigantic undertaking, died in exile. It was not until a hundred years later, under the pontificate of Innocent III. (1198-1216), that the papal theocratic power culminated. For in the actual exercise of despotic power over princes, this talented and daring administrator has never had an equal.

But neither did Innocent succeed. In England, for example, when King John, at his command, surrendered his crown, humbly receiving it back as a vassal of Rome, the barons took the national cause in their own hands, compelled their recreant king to sign the Great Charter, and paid no heed to the papal sentence of excommunication when it was pronounced against them. In other countries, likewise, the spirit of national self-preservation kept asserting itself. It could not have been otherwise. The papal dream of political power over the nations, to rule them from the throne of Peter

with a rod of iron, was ever impossible of realization.

Not, however, that it has been theoretically abandoned. According to the Roman theory, the claim of Pius X., though unspoken, must be essentially the same as that of Gregory VII. The difference is not in prerogative but in circumstances. After impregnable defenses have been built about the harbor's mouth, the freedom and quiet of the city is no proof that the hostile navy has quit the seas.

V

As to the Eastern Church, it has not yet departed from its position, under the early Christian emperors, of willing acquiescence in the rule of the State. Never did it adopt the theory that unto patriarch or pope divine authority has been granted to set up and pluck down the rulers of the nations. But on the other hand never did it even seek to separate itself from the oversight and jurisdiction of the civil government. What the papacy rejected the patriarchate has always stood for—a national ecclesiasticism.

To the Latin mind catholicity demanded a universal organization under the successor of Peter, a single autocratic sovereign; to the Greek mind catholicity meant the historic Church as united in the profession of the same faith, "*The Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Oriental Church.*" To the Latin mind the Church must go forth and

bring all nations unto the obedience of the faith; to the Greek mind the Church was far less of a missionary society. And in entire harmony with these marks of Eastern Christianity has been the disposition to yield itself to national pressure and come into a close quiescent relation with the State. It is seen in Greece and Russia in the present day, just as it was seen in the Greek Empire during the whole thousand years of its existence.

III

CHURCH AND STATE: MODERN

IF it be asked what change was effected in the relations of Church and State by the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the general answer is simple enough. There was no essential change. The Reformation hardly dealt with the question, except to throw off the yoke of Rome and reorganize the churches in alliance with the State alone. The fundamental idea of Constantine in making the old Roman Empire Christian, and of Charlemagne in making the new Roman Empire "Holy," and of pontiffs and priests in all their welding together of "the crook and the crown," persisted. Now that there were several prominent organic forms of Christianity in Western Europe, this idea was no less influential than before, when as yet there was but one. Not only in England, where the king led the way and commanded the people, clergy and laity, to follow, and where the motive was royal supremacy and not the purification of Christian doctrine, but also on the Continent, where scholars and teachers led the way, and the motive was the purification of Christian doctrine, the Church took its place under the supervision and government of the State.

Though the English Churchman and the Puritan—to take a conspicuous example—differed irreconcilably on the question of internal ecclesiastical polity, and did not hesitate to chronicle their differences in bitter controversies and bloody war, yet as to the rights and duties of the State with reference to the Church, the two parties were in substantial accord. The doctrine of the Thirty-nine Articles and of the Westminster Confession were here essentially the same.¹ On the Continent, also, the Lutheran and the Reformed Church were, as to this question, well enough agreed.

Significant and resultful was the Edict of the Diet of Speier in the year 1526, to the effect that for what the State should hold as religious truth it was answerable to God and the Emperor. Because, in such a proclamation the State was implicitly recognized as judge in matters of Christian doctrine and ritual.

It was now inevitable that the churches, which for more than two hundred years already had been depending less upon the Roman Curia and more upon the State, should, under Protestantism, become more national than ever. In fact, they now became for the first time distinctly national, the sovereign being substituted for the Pope. Much of the authority hitherto exercised by the bishops, and even greater authority, was given into the

¹Thirty-nine Articles, Art. 37; "Westminster Confession," c. XXIII., Sec. 3.

hands of the prince with his council or parliament.

Prince and parliament were to determine both creed and forms of worship, appoint officers of teaching and administration, control ecclesiastical property, and rule in the house of God as if it were the royal palace or court.

I

It would be a rash conclusion, however, that no need of reformation at this point was felt. The need was felt. Luther had declared that the secular power was "to secure external peace and order, and to protect men, their persons and property, against evil doers," that "heresy is something spiritual, which cannot be hewn with steel or burned with fire," that "whenever, therefore, the temporal power presumes to legislate for the soul, it encroaches." But more significant than any individual utterance, even of the first great Protestant leader, is the doctrine of the first Protestant confession of faith—that of Augsburg—which was set forth as early as the year 1530. In this Lutheran creed it is asserted: "The administration of civil affairs has to do with other matters than the gospel deals with. The magistrate does not defend men's minds but their bodies, and other corporeal things, against manifest injuries; and he coerces men by corporal pains, in order to uphold civil justice and peace. Wherefore the ecclesias-

tical and civil powers are not to be confounded.”²

But this was not the chief matter upon which the heart of the Reformers had been set. They were striving to put aside the self-invented mediating hierarchy, and open the way for each individual soul to come directly to God in Jesus Christ. Their gospel, like that of Jesus and the apostles, was a personal message, the coming of the kingdom of God as righteousness and peace within each man's heart. Accordingly they were occupied with doctrines of grace rather than politico-religious questions. Their view of these questions had not clearly defined itself nor their convictions crystallized. Here, therefore, they were open to the influence of circumstance and expediency.

What were the existing circumstances and the apparent expediency? Rome was crushing the revolt against her authority, not only by supernatural terrors but also, wherever possible, by the secular arm.* But in some states Protestantism was in the ascendancy. Might it not in like manner use the secular arm for defense against Rome—or any other enemy? So, when it was asked Luther what should be done when both Romish and evangelical teachers were propagating their tenets in the same district, he replied that the magistrate

²Part II., Art. VII.

ought to "hear both sides, and since it is not good that in one parish people should be exposed to contradictory preaching, he should order to be silent which ever side does not consist with the Scriptures."³

More than once have Christian leaders and teachers erred by making too much of an expedient, as if it were a principle; but the error in this instance was the degradation of a principle to the level of expediency. The age of the Reformation, moreover, was an age not of free government but of political absolutism. The thought that the people should be ruled with the strong hand, rather than be self-governed, and that the rights of minorities might be disregarded, was familiar to men's minds. Luther, with all his individualism, held no high opinion of the competency of "the common man"—such at least as he was in that day—to take part in government, either civil or ecclesiastic. He was slow to put responsibility upon ignorant and turbulent men recently won to the true evangelical faith, as the Apostle to the Gentiles did, for example, in the Corinthian congregation. And this depreciative opinion was confirmed by the excesses of the Anabaptists and of the Peasants in their War.

³"Such a concession was of course fatal." (Innes, "Church and State," p. 131.) Cf. Köstlin, "Life of Luther" (English translation), pp. 312-316; Gieseler, "Church History," Vol. IV., Sec. 46.

Indeed, the complete claim of religious liberty was new and strange to the ruling ideas of the age. That active and persistent heretics ought to be put to death was taught by eminent theologians, and doubtless generally received as a true Christian doctrine.

As to Calvin, while insisting that the Church in the administration of discipline must stand independent of the State, and suffering banishment for his convictions, he also held that a Christian State should punish offenses against religion. And so were they punished by the Genevan magistracy.

How, then, did the intolerance practiced under the Lutheran or the Calvinian teaching differ from the intolerance that had long been practiced with the most cruel consistency under the Roman teaching? The essential difference had reference to the seat of authoritative judgment in religion. The Roman Catholic State was to restrain or punish those whom the Church condemned; the Protestant State was to judge for itself whom to restrain or punish.

It was under these circumstances, then, that the work of reformation was arrested at a vital point, and the dogma of religious coercion carried over from Rome to Geneva, Augsburg, London.

II

But protests were heard. Some Christian believers could not conscientiously accept the doc-

trines and usages of the State Church. The very first of the twelve just and reasonable demands that brought on the Peasants' War was that they might have liberty to "choose their own pastors to preach the gospel" (and the second, that they might have the privilege of paying "a tithe of grain, partly for the pastor's support, and the rest to the poor"). But the most notable representatives of the principle of full religious liberty were the Anabaptists (leaving out of consideration such of their number as were really anarchists) and the Independents. They not only formed congregations of their own, contrary to the established order, but denied that any such order had a right to exist. The Church, they urged, should keep herself free from any alliance whatever with the State.

Now if one should inquire whether at the heart of this protest lay the principle of self-preservation rather than of religious liberty,—whether, if these advocates of the free Church system had constituted a vast majority instead of a hopelessly small minority of the Christian people of their respective countries, they too, in accord with the spirit of the age, would have approved of the punishment of dissent with civil pains and penalties,—it would simply be a question in the air. We know that these men were true believers in Christ and reverent readers of the Scriptures; but where is the analyst of character who could show just the gradation of motives by which they were actuated?

Little marvel, however, that with the New Testament as the one rule of faith and practice, sincere seekers of truth should come to believe in the freedom of the Church. And in this particular case the circumstances were such as to promote rather than to check the clearing of this conviction in their own minds, and its confession before the world. Accordingly through many severe persecutions these Christian confessors not only survived but increased in wisdom and in strength. Their successors constitute some of the mightiest evangelical forces of the present day.

III

In all State Churches the power of the civil governor is subject to substantially the same delimitation. He is not authorized to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, to pronounce absolution, or to ordain to the ministry. These are maintained as purely ecclesiastic functions. But outside this inmost sphere there is little or nothing that does not fall within the power of the secular, or "temporal," officers of the State.

The Church of England is a good example. Its legislative bodies are the Convocations of Canterbury and York, which consist exclusively of clerical members. But Convocation cannot assemble without a writ of the Crown. Nor do its acts have any validity till confirmed by the national Parliament. Then only they become laws. As a matter

of fact, the Convocation of Canterbury was prorogued by the king in 1717 and not permitted to meet again till the middle of the nineteenth century.⁴ With the king, as head of the Church, rests also the power to appoint bishops to their office and to sit as supreme judge in all cases of appeal. There can be no discipline of Church members, except under the supervision and final authority of the civil courts.

To most Christian minds such a form of Church organization must seem, at least until the subtle power of custom has softened or disguised its natural features, painfully unfit. That a legislature composed of men of all manner of religious beliefs and of no religious belief at all, or a king, whether hereditary or elective, whether a believer or an unbeliever, whether saint, sensualist, weakling, or criminal, should sit supreme to control the Church life of Christ's redeemed people is something worse than a caricature of spiritual rule and government.⁵

Comparing the papal and the State Church theo-

⁴Perry, "History of Church of England," p. 585 ff.

⁵"To acquiesce in the establishment of National Churches . . . must always appear, when scrutinized, contrary to the nature of a religious body, opposed to the genius of Christianity, defensible, when capable of defense at all, only as a temporary resource in the face of insuperable difficulties." (Bryce, "Holy Roman Empire," p. 95.) Cf. R. W. Dale, "Fellowship With Christ," pp. 200-207.

ry, one can hardly fail to note a difference in the relation of idea and fact. With the papacy the idea is first: the bishop of Rome claims to be enthroned of God to rule the nations. Then, under the influence of this idea, their actual subjection to his sway occurs. With the State Church, on the other hand, the fact is first. The civil ruler, whether a Constantine, a Charlemagne, or a Henry VIII., finds himself in a situation where by patronage and rulership of the Church he may greatly strengthen his government; the Church at the same time trembles at the thought of resisting, and sees large apparent advantage in accepting, the will of the sovereign power: and so the politico-ecclesiastic alliance becomes a fact. Then, in justification of the fact, the idea defines itself and the supporting arguments are offered.

The main affirmative argument is found in the example of the Church of Israel. But it has also been urged that as every commonwealth ought to provide the people with the means of living well, it must furnish them with the ordinances of religion, without which their highest welfare is impossible; that it is not to be believed that a pagan sovereign, whose authority in religion is supreme, should be required to resign such authority, and in respect to religion become "subject to his subjects," in the case of a national conversion to Christianity; that a nation, according to the Christian conception, is both State and Church—two

accidents in one substance, somewhat as a fire may give both light and heat, or as a man may be both a schoolmaster and a physician; that as the laws of a nation are the best attainable expression of its own will, there is reason and propriety in its expressing its will in the interests of religion as well as in less important interests; that an established system of religious teaching is a very proper concern of civil government; that while the Old Testament authorizes, the New Testament does not forbid, the union of Church and State.

The whole question may be said to turn upon a single fundamental definition. If a church of Jesus Christ be one and the same thing with a nation whose prevailing religious belief is Christianity—while many of its people make no personal confession, in creed or conduct, of the Christian religion, or even actually disbelieve it—the two institutions being in reality one, their government must indeed be one and undivided. If, on the other hand, a church be a congregation of personal followers of Jesus Christ—"a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered"—then it is impossible of justification that its creed and liturgy should be determined and its pastors appointed by the State. "The Parliament," says Richard Hooker, "is not so merely temporal a court as if it might meddle with only

nothing but leather and wool.”⁶ Which is no truer a saying than that the Parliament is not so spiritual a court as if it might meddle with the faith and the forms of worship and government of a congregation of Jesus Christ.

IV

It was not in the Old World that the now familiar principle of the free Church was to be subjected to the first fair and unhindered test. It was in a sparsely settled but resourceful country, soon to become the seat of an enterprising and powerful nation, over-sea.

The representatives of the American people who met in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 were acquainted with the practical effect of State Churchism. They had known it not only historically but in their own day and on their own soil. For with one exception it had appeared, to a larger or smaller extent, in the government of all the colonies.⁷ Even Pennsylvania had so far departed from the “holy experiment” (which itself did not offer perfect religious liberty) of its Quaker founder as to require public officers to subscribe their belief in the Holy Trinity and the inspiration of the Scriptures and reject the most

⁶“Ecclesiastical Polity,” Bk. VIII., in which the argument for the State Church is strongly presented.

⁷“Cambridge Platform,” c. XVII. 8; Ladd, “Principles of Church Polity,” pp. 135, 136, 139.

prominent Roman Catholic rites; and Maryland, called the "land of the sanctuary," because of its offering an asylum alike to Romanists, Anglicans, and Puritans, officially denounced the punishment of death against disbelievers in the Trinity,⁸ and subsequently harassed with unjust restrictions the Catholic coreligionists of its honorable founder. The little colony of Rhode Island alone granted full religious liberty.⁹

And on this side the sea, as in the mother countries, the course of the State Church had been marked by fines, deprivation of office, whippings, and imprisonments, for conscience' sake.

In the New England Colonies the theocratic idea was strongly represented. Shall we condemn it? Is it not, properly speaking, the true idea of all government? The Pilgrims and Puritans said: The one supreme ruler, alike of the individual life, the home, and the state, is God himself; there is a will of God as to how a people shall be governed; and it is the business of the law-maker and magistrate to embody that will in the laws and their administration. Here is a confession of faith which no believer in the God of the Bible, who is the God of our whole human life, will controvert. Here is an ideal for every

⁸Elson, "History of the United States," p. 80.

⁹Bancroft, "History of the United States," Vol. I., c. XIII.; Cobb, "Rise of Religious Liberty in America," p. 436.

citizen and every legislator to keep continually before him. The error of these colonists was not in holding such a faith but in their interpretation of its requirements. They identified their own austere views of Christian conduct with the will of God, and believed it to be in accordance with that same divine will that men should be forced by civil pains and penalties to conform to these views. Here was confusion and many an evil work.

The State Church, then, so far from promoting reverence for either Church or State, seemed to the American mind a part of the Old World tyranny; and therefore in the name of civil and religious liberty it was condemned. The Federal Constitution, in its sixth article, was made to forbid that any "religious test shall ever be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the United States"; and in the first amendment it was enacted that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

These enactments, it will be seen, do not forbid the several states, as such, from legislating on the subject of religion. As late as the year 1833 the people of Massachusetts were taxed for the support of the Congregational churches. But in none of the states is there now an established Church, a tax for the maintenance of religion, or any restraint on the freedom of worship.

It was the first instance, in the history of the

world, of a nation organizing itself upon the strictly defined basis of the entire distinctness of Church and State; and many were the prophecies of ill, at home and especially abroad, that it evoked. An unbelieving and immoral nation was confidently predicted as the result. But surely the unbelief was, first of all, in the minds of those who had so little faith in the Church of Christ as to suppose it dependent for any large and permanent success upon the civil power. They were the skeptics.

V

Standing together on the principles of non-alliance and friendly coöperation, what may the Church and the State be expected to do each for the other? The Church, as the interpreter of human life in all its interests and institutions, will interpret the State—teaching the divine origin and purpose of civil government, with the consequent duty of universal submission to its authority. The Church, with her Bible and her Christian faith, is a school for the education of the sense of selfhood, through which the free and self-governing State is made possible. The Church will inculcate those principles of morality and religion that are the surest warrant of a nation's strength and perpetuity. She will circulate the Bible; she will guard the integrity of the family; she will protest, in the name of the Son of Man, against the oppression of the poor, against all oppression,

greed, and injustice, whether as between class and class or between individual and individual, and whether within or without the forms of law; she will promote that order of things in which each man will have opportunity to develop his own powers and to live his own personal and human (not merely animal) life. The Church will do these things, indeed, with the motive of immediate Christly service to men; but in doing them she will render the State the truest possible service. The State, on her part, will protect the Church in the possession of property and in the enjoyment of freedom in administration and worship.

Further than this neither may be required to go, in the fulfillment of obligation to the other.

It does not follow that a national government must needs be non-religious or non-Christian. Just how much it ought to do for its people, indeed, is a question which need not here be considered. Most thinkers on the subject will probably agree that it ought, in some measure, to guarantee them not only the right but also the opportunity of the "pursuit of happiness."¹⁰ But waiving the questions at issue between individualism and paternalism (and it might be added, "fraternalism"), not undertaking to decide how far civil government may justly and wisely go in pro-

¹⁰Nash, "Genesis of the Social Conscience," p. 280.

viding asylums, educational institutions, mail facilities, public roads, improved harbors, enlargement and equalization of industrial opportunities, or in any way caring for the general welfare of its citizens, beyond the mere defense of their legal rights, it may unquestionably claim authority to do whatever may be necessary to its own preservation. And the recognition of the religious needs of the people is one such necessary measure. At least the attempt to establish and maintain a government in utter disregard of the Supreme Ruler and Judge would be a new and perilous experiment. Accordingly the court of justice may administer oaths; the legislature may be opened with prayer; the army and navy, with their training schools, may have religious services conducted at the public expense.

Upon the same ground may be rested the claim of the civil Sabbath. Providing the people of the commonwealth with the opportunity of needed physical rest, and guarding the day of public worship from such desecration as would defeat the moral upbuilding which is included in its object, the State is taking measures for its own protection.

VI

More nearly a storm center is the politico-religious question of the teaching of religion in the public schools. As an abstract question, however, it may be believed to stand or fall with that of the

public school itself. A democratic government claims the right to tax all citizens for the education of children, on the ground that a democracy finds education necessary to secure its own ends: it is essential to good citizenship, and hence to the maintenance of free institutions. But what education is thus necessary? Not merely that of the intellect, but equally, as all civilization, past and present, has shown, that of the heart and conscience.¹¹ Indeed, vice, not ignorance, is the chief peril. Lack of self-control and of self-giving, not lack of letters, has wrought the doom of the buried civilizations. Social efficiency is the mightiest factor in developing the life of any nation. When

¹¹"As the right of sustenance is of equal date with birth, so the right of intellectual and moral training begins at least as early as when children are ordinarily sent to school. At that time, then, by the irrepealable law of Nature, every child succeeds to so much more of the property of the community as is necessary for his education. He is to receive this, not in the form of lands, or of gold and silver, but in the form of knowledge and a training to good habits. This is one of the steps in the transfer of property from a present to a succeeding generation. . . . Certainly, in a republican government, the obligation of the predecessors, and the right of the successors, extend to and embrace the means of such an amount of education as will prepare each individual to perform all the duties which devolve upon him as a man and a citizen. It may go further than this point: certainly, it cannot fall short of it." (Horace Mann, Tenth Annual Report.)

certain pupils of a great American school-teacher, being asked, "What are you here to learn?" answered, "To behave well," they spoke far more wisely than they knew.

Every human society must find in the law of love the expression of its central truth, the guarantee of its permanence, and the line of its progress. That which, at its highest point of expression, is the mind of Christ proves to be the quickening spirit of all organized or associated life. A State, therefore, in making provision for the religious and moral training of its citizens in the formative period of their lives, may undoubtedly be regarded as providing for its own security.

Is it asserted that morals but not religion shall be taught in the public school? The reply must be, that, in the absence of faith in God, the moral life will lack the illumination and support which its successful maintenance demands.

But what shall be said of a State which, on account of the division of its citizenship into certain great sections along strongly marked lines of religious faith—say, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish—feels constrained to leave the Bible and all prescribed forms of worship out of its schools?¹²

¹²The law of the several states differs widely on the subject of the Bible in the school. In some states it is required, in some prohibited, in some permitted. "In 1896 reports on this subject were gathered from nine hundred and forty-six superintendents, representing

Does it thereby necessarily leave religion out? This does not follow. In the whole management of the school the ethical and religious view point may be taken, and must be taken if the education offered is worthy of the name. The truths of the Divine Fatherhood and Christ's law of love, or Christian morality, may be taught both directly and indirectly. Teachers may be chosen in whose lives these truths are exemplified, and thus the personality of the teacher, a far more potent influence than all his formal words, be enlisted in behalf of the pupil's moral and spiritual development. So, without the inculcation of specific dogmas, the school, if it will, may reënforce the teaching of the Church and the Christian home.¹³

It may go further. It may prescribe a textbook on religion and morals for the use of its pupils. A book of this character, teaching the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the divine value of life, and Christian morality—and consisting largely of passages of Holy Scripture—could give no just offense to any religious body.¹⁴

all parts of the country. Of this number four hundred and fifty-four reported the Bible as read in all their schools, two hundred and ninety-five reported it as read in part of their schools, and one hundred and ninety-seven reported it as read in none of their schools." ("Proceedings of the Religious Education Association," 1903, pp. 132, 133.)

¹³Coe, "Education in Religion and Morals," p. 354.

¹⁴"If any religious instruction at all is given in the

Such distinct and systematic teaching of the most important of all truth, in every school curriculum, is imperatively called for; and present indications justify the hope that in the not distant future the demand will be met.¹⁵

The embodied principle of "a self-supporting and self-governing Christianity, in independent but friendly relation to the civil government," has been described as America's chief distinctive contribution to Christian history. It may seem strange that not until so late a period as the eighteenth century, and in a new, crude country,

public schools, it must be of that broad, universal kind which is practically held in common by all of our people—Jews and Christians, Protestants and Catholics, Church members and adherents of no religious sect. . . . I for one believe that there are such religious truths, and that it is possible to teach them, not only without offense, but to the edification of all. . . . What, then, are these religious truths that should be taught in the public schools? 1. Belief in God. . . . This belief carries with it the doctrine of the fatherhood of God. . . . 2. The brotherhood of man. The fatherhood of God presupposes the brotherhood of man. . . . 3. The value of life. . . . If they [children] understand that every act, every thought, and every aspiration lifts them to a higher plane—near God—or drags them down, then living has a new significance. . . . 4. The moral order of the universe." (Dr. C. H. Thurber, in "Proceedings of the Religious Education Association," 1903, pp. 140-142.) The whole address is noteworthy.

¹⁵"There ought to be a text-book of Bible study and

should such a contribution to the power and progress of the Church have been made. For the principle itself, now that it has been exemplified, seems clear enough: only in its varied applications, as in the applications of many another great principle, will any fringe of obscurity be found to test the wisdom and strength of its administrators.¹⁶ In fact, however, this "new chapter in the history of Christianity" cannot be claimed as a modern discovery. Only through neglect or obscuration of the New Testament could it have failed of recognition throughout the course of the Christian era. It is a rediscovery.

readings for use in public schools. It is no irreverence for Scripture to make selections from it. Every minister does that every Sunday. Many parts of this collection of books (biblia) are not adapted either to reading aloud or to study by immature minds. But the great core and substance of the Bible, Old Testament and New, is approved by all intelligent Christians and could be used in public schools with no offense to any reasonable man. Immortality awaits the judicious editor of such a text-book Bible." (The Christian Advocate, Nashville, November 2, 1906.)

¹⁶The recent violent separation of Church and State in France presents a sharp contrast with the peaceful provision for their separateness in the American Constitution. Yet the breaking of a harmful alliance even though it should not be done in the perfect spirit of wisdom and equity, may result eventually in the good of both parties; and it is no unreasonable hope that the withdrawal of State patronage from the Churches of France will serve, not injure, the cause of religion.

IV

THE CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH: DIVISION

FREEDOM is not for its own sake. It serves as a condition of some larger realization of unity, service, life. Like space in the material world, it is simply *room to be*. Misimproved, it becomes more bane than blessing. Better be kept a perpetual child under tutors and governors than misuse, to the destruction of oneself and others, the liberty that comes with approaching manhood. If there be a child race, the same principle would be applicable to that race. If there be a child Church, here too the principle would apply. Was not ancient Israel such a Church? But shall this be said also of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Congregation of the Spirit of truth?

As noted on a preceding page, the liberty which is given in Christian freedom includes the right to change or discontinue existing forms of worship, and to adopt new forms, as may be judged expedient, "according to the varied exigencies of times and occasions." Not, of course, to do away with congregational worship itself, but to regulate its outward expression. The divine ordinance must be perpetuated: its expressions are variable.

"It is a most valuable part of that blessed liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," says the Book of Common Prayer, "that in his worship different forms and usages may without offense be allowed, provided the substance of the faith be kept entire."

In like manner, the Church, holding as an ordinance of God the power of government, has been intrusted with the liberty to regulate the forms in which it shall be put forth.¹ But great have been the abuses of Christian liberty in many spheres; and among others, in this. Enfranchised by Him who said, "Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ," the servants of the One Master have not always been faithful and wise to rule themselves.

The divine right of kings, once so powerful a sentiment even in the freedom-loving English race, is no longer credible. The world seems steadily coming to believe it to be God's will that a nation should govern itself according to the measure of its ability. The divine right of bishops, however, is asserted as vigorously as ever. Yet the proof is lacking. Any one definite form of Church polity is equally unable with the civil monarchy to establish its claim, at the bar of Scripture, reason, or history, as an ordinance of world-wide and God-given authority.

Nevertheless just as in the State there is the

¹See above, pp. 38, 39, n.

crime of rebellion, so in the Church there is the sin of schism. A company of subjects or of citizens, no matter how large and respectable, is utterly unjustifiable in dissolving, without imperative cause, the ties that bind it to the civil government under which it exists. A company of Christian people, be it composed of ten or ten thousand, is equally or more unjustifiable in setting up, without imperative cause, a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

True, the essential oneness of the universal Church is its inner unity; but is not the same thing true of the local congregation, which nevertheless must also be outwardly one? The simple truth is that in either case, that of the local or that of the larger Church, the inner is both shown forth and promoted by the outer unity, which is likewise a sacred trust.

Intercongregational communion began with the very beginning of Christianity. But tempting occasions of withdrawal from it occurred almost as soon. The chief of the apostles labored all through his ministerial life, and successfully, to prevent a schism between Jewish and Gentile believers. Very easily might an alien organization have been started, on the plea of equal rights for all, in the very city where the disciples were first called Christians. Had the Judaizers continued to insist upon their dogma, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved," it would

certainly have taken place. But the Antiochians, in the spirit of wisdom and moderation, sent their delegation to the mother church at Jerusalem to inquire about this disturbing question. Antioch, Jerusalem—in the infant societies of Christians in these two cities two opposite tendencies were represented. Antioch was inclined toward a larger freedom, and the adjustment of Christian ordinances to the requirements of the new revelation and the new environment; Jerusalem was conservative, traditional. But when Antioch seeks counsel of Jerusalem, her inquiries are answered in the same wise and moderate spirit in which they were conceived; and the threatened alienation is prevented.

Who are the schismatics? First, they are those who enforce conditions of Church membership which are not only different from but contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. When, for example, a church requires its members to profess faith in the Roman mass, or forbids their meeting together for Christian communion and worship except in the observance of a certain written liturgy, it thereby becomes in spirit and effect a schismatic body. By rendering it impossible for multitudes of truest disciples of Christ to continue in its membership, it violates the manifested unity of his Church. Secondly, the schismatics are those who for any insufficient cause withdraw from a Church of Christ and set up a

separate and competitive organization of their own. Thirdly, in a milder sense of the term, the schismatics are those who, on the one hand, refuse to make reasonable concessions to the views of their brethren in matters of creed, liturgy, and polity, and those who, on the other hand, are more given to advocating their views and insisting upon their rights than upon doing their duty in Christian love.

Indeed, on either side, and in all its manifestations, the spirit of schism is a sin against love.

I

To the student of Christendom from an ecumenical view point, the scene, for the last three hundred years, is painfully perplexing, if not deplorable. On the one hand, the old historic Churches of Greece and Rome, confounding submission to ecclesiastical authority with saving faith, and securing unity at the expense of fundamental truth: salvation being made to depend upon an imaginary sacramental grace which may be given or withheld at the administrator's will. On the other hand, the truer Catholicism of the Protestant world subdividing along the lines of both doctrine and polity into numerous distinct and separate bodies contending oftentimes in bitter rivalry with one another.

The most recent decades, however, have gladdened the scene with increasing signs of promise.

The floods are still out, but the rainbow brightens in the sky.

Let the admission be gladly made that denominationalism in the modern Church has been attended with a certain measure of advantage.

It is sometimes asserted that this advantage appears in *doctrinal teaching*—one denomination stressing this scripture and another that, so as to secure the strong presentation of the whole circle of evangelical doctrine.

This consolatory word, however, would better bear analysis, if the doctrinal differences which divide the Churches were simple differences in the placing of emphasis. But in point of fact they are differences in kind. The distinctive denominational teachings are exclusive of each other: all cannot be true, and it must be better, therefore, that they all should not be propagated. If it be true, for example, that our Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for a part of the human family only, then to teach that his atonement is equally for them all is false; and we cannot suppose it promotive of the world's evangelization that one pulpit should proclaim a truth and a neighboring pulpit its contradictory. So with the question, whether baptism may be administered in more than one mode, or to more than one class of subjects; so with the Lutheran as compared with the Calvinian doctrine of the Lord's Supper; so with other points of belief.

Now the insistence of a certain school of thought in the Church, or of a certain age in the Church's history, upon some long-neglected truth—as, for instance, justification by faith, or the divine sovereignty, or the personal consciousness of salvation, or the fatherhood of God—is indeed a great and needful service. But this is not denominationalism: it is presenting different aspects of the one truth, not advocating both a truth and its opposite error.

It is also sometimes said that the good of the denominational forms of Christianity may be found in *diversity of ritual and organization*. It is a matter, we are told, not of truth but of method, not of life but of the ways of living. A form of worship or of government may be admirably adapted to one set of circumstances, or to one providential purpose, while a different form would be more effective for another. Can anybody believe, for example, that the work of American Methodism could have been accomplished under a congregational polity? The governing Conference, the general superintendency, and the itinerant ministry were indispensable conditions of its success. On the other hand, many a minister under congregational government has wrought a work and exerted an influence, in his settled pastorate, for the Redeemer's kingdom, that would have been impossible under an itinerant system. Who supposes it best that Joseph Parker should have been

removed from the City Temple, or Spurgeon from the Tabernacle? No one ecclesiastical arrangement is absolutely the best, just as no one personal gift of intellect or speech is sufficient for the whole work of the Church. Well may there be many administrations inspired and guided by the one Spirit.

But here the question arises, whether this diversity of administration might not exist under a common government; or, if this were impossible, under such a federation of Churches as would insure the greatest possible unity.

Another incidental advantage that has been claimed for denominationalism is *emulation*. Not rivalry, which is baneful, but response to inspiring example, and unselfish competition to be foremost in every good work.

Imagine a Christian village of a thousand inhabitants: one church spire pointing heavenward; the sound of one church bell calling to the house of prayer; one pastor, large-minded, gifted, devout, a true father in God to the people; no denominational differences or divisions; the rich and the poor meeting and laboring together for the coming of Christ's kingdom—it is surely a picture to charm any imagination. But the fact that such a state of things is still “a world not realized” cannot be charged to the account of denominationalism alone. It is due to deeper causes. Perhaps we have known a community in which some

one Church had full sway, and yet the work of Christ did not greatly prosper. There was little Christian activity; a lukewarm and easy-going piety threatened to become the prevailing type. But some other Church, with a different spirit and different methods, made its appearance on the scene; and one result was the quickening of the older congregation into newness of life.

Now what is shown in a single community is equally true collectively: one whole denomination may stir up others to love and good works. It will hardly be disputed, for example, that the rise of Protestantism incited a moral reformation in the Roman Catholic Church, or that the Presbyterian Churches have elevated the standard of ministerial education, or that the Episcopal Common Prayer has been an effective witness for unity and order in congregational worship, or that Methodism has been attended from its beginning with revival influences upon the various churches with which it has come into contact. It is irrelevant to insist that Christians ought not to need the incentive of emulation in their high calling—that the love of Christ should be sufficient. As a matter of fact they do need such incentives; nor can these be condemned as unchristian motives.

It remains, however, to be shown whether a more healthful and brotherly, though it should be a somewhat less urgent and continuous, spirit of emulation might not be incited by the different

congregations or synods of one common Church. Certainly, as of old, Macedonia might provoke Achaia and Achaia Macedonia to liberal giving.

Again, it has been suggested, with much truth and reason, that denominationalism has *proved the futility of false ecclesiastical claims*. Christopher Columbus, on his famous voyage of exploration, made indeed a great positive discovery; but even had he accomplished nothing in this direction, the voyage would have been worth while for the sake of his great negative discovery—namely, the nonexistence of a “sea of terrors.” Similarly have various Christian communions demonstrated that some particular form of doctrine or administration—as, for instance, apostolic succession, or congregational government—supposed by many of its adherents to be an indispensable mark of the true Church, is by no means necessary to the largest success in the cause of Christ.

Still other considerations have been set forth, with more or less of forcefulness, in favor of denominational organizations: such as, “the liberation of Christian thinking,” “the distribution of authority,” “the humanizing of Christianity,” “the indirect testimony to the universality of Christian truth.”²

Most of such pleas are offered from the standpoint of a comparison of Protestantism with the

²Charles Cuthbert Hall, “Universal Elements of the Christian Religion” (Cole Lectures, 1905), p. 81.

Romanism by which it was preceded. Their force is greatly reduced, when the Christian denominations as they now exist are brought into comparison not with Rome but with ideal forms of Church government, or even with those of the Catholic Church before the coming of either Christian emperor or pope.³

II

Turning now to the other side of the question, we shall find the evils attendant upon present-day denominationalism to be more conspicuous than its advantages.

One of these evils is the excessive multiplica-

³It is not forgotten that the Catholic Church of the second and third centuries was far from being an ideal institution; nor is there any intention to idealize it. There were both heresies and schisms, some of which doubtless might have been prevented or cured by a more Christlike spirit in the churches. If the followers of Marcion could not have been kept back by any Christian brotherliness or wisdom from setting up their separate heretical communities, there is good reason to believe that the followers of Montanus might have been saved to the "Great Church," greatly to its advantage, instead of being disfellowshipped by their often less worthy and less orthodox brethren, and finally persecuted out of existence by the Imperial government. Nevertheless, relatively to our modern ecclesiastical status, these early associated churches may be taken as a fair example of unity and federation.

tion of separate ecclesiastical bodies. If it be not for any one to say just how many there ought to be, nobody will deny that unwise and avoidable separations have taken place, and uncalled-for communions arisen. Shall they now be maintained through the pride of heredity or the inertia of custom? In such a book as "The Religious Forces of the United States" (Vol. I. of American Church History Series) more than a hundred evangelical Christian denominations are described as existing side by side, or rather interpenetrating one another, in our own land. Thus the denominational degenerates into the sectarian.

Let it be granted, for the sake of illustration, that the Presbyterian and the Methodist are each fulfilling a providential mission, so that modern Christianity would be distinctly worse off without either of them: it does not follow that the numerous organized divisions of Presbyterianism in Scotland, or of Methodism in England,⁴ or of both in

"He tells of four Methodist superintendent ministers who had walked one recent Sunday morning to a village four miles from the circuit town to preach to congregations that would barely have filled one of the chapels. 'All those ministers,' he says, 'were one in name, one in doctrine, and one in heart. To make the matter more monstrous, I do not believe there was a single person in either of the chapels that could have given an intelligent reason why he was not in one of the others.'" (Mantle, "Life of Hugh Price Hughes," p. 89.)

the United States,⁵ are a part of that providential mission. The clay has been marred in the hands of the potter.⁶ The strength that comes from union has been recklessly sacrificed.

All strongly marked difference is not to be sharpened into an instrument of division; else how could any human society endure? Following such a rule, how many civilized families would long hold together? What would become of the

⁵"There are hundreds and thousands of places where circuits overlap and where each branch of Methodism has a church building in a stone's throw of each other, and one or both with just a handful of adherents and a pitifully small congregation. If there were vital differences in doctrines, or if we even could persuade ourselves that there were, then we might go on as in the past; but when we know there is not a single difference worth mentioning, the situation becomes strangely incongruous. Our contention is that we have no right to sacrifice our preachers on the altar of this god of prejudice, nor have we the right to sacrifice the money the people put into our treasuries for missionary purposes to such unholy uses." (A. J. Joslyn, in *Methodist Illustrated Magazine*.)

⁶"By the smallest measure of reasonable concession, involving only the simplest principles of common courtesy, one hundred and forty-five sects might be reduced to forty-two. And the differences which would still divide them would be of an origin so obscure as to perplex the majority of Church members who might be asked to give an explanation." (Hodges, "Faith and Social Service," p. 252.)

Christian home? On the other hand, differences themselves become agreements when men agree to differ and work in harmony for some greater truth in which they can stand together.

Now we have gone thus far on the assumption that the establishment of denominations has been a peaceful and well-conducted process throughout. But the slightest knowledge of their history will show how far otherwise has been the fact. In many cases the independent camps have begun and continued as antagonistic camps. While the common foe has not been lost sight of, neither has the opportunity of making ill-advised assaults, either openly or under cover of night, upon each other's forces. And many a triumph has been celebrated over that which has lowered the spiritual tone and demoralized the Christian energies alike of both the contending parties. To the angels in heaven it has brought no joy.

As to "those who are without," the skeptical or unsympathetic onlookers—"the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

It may be suggested in reply that similar contentions occur inside denominational lines—that it was to a local congregation that their apostolic founder wrote, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" But the sorrowful fact is that when the subjects of controversy are denominationalized not only is their relative importance seriously ex-

aggerated, but also they become hardened into perpetuity and organized for enduring activity and conflict. Was it the apostle's teaching that any party in the Corinthian Church should say, "Since we cannot see eye to eye and live like-minded together, it would be better to separate"; and not rather that Christ should be all in all?

The economic consideration also may not be ignored or minified. There is an enormous waste of resources. Money contributed to the support of a Christian denomination is supposed to be contributed to the Church of Christ for the maintenance and enlargement of its work. It is the Lord's money, given in his name. This is the argument with which the pulpit presses the duty of cheerful giving upon the heart and conscience of the people. Denominations are so many agencies through which the work of Christ is to be done. Except in this character, they have no proper claim on Christian sympathy and support. But so far as a denomination is unnecessary or is unduly extended, it becomes obstructive, hindering rather than helping.

The best illustration of this state of affairs will be found not in the city, where it may be said that there is room enough for all, but in the smaller towns and the villages. Here it is more than possible for the churches to be in each other's way: there is not room for all. In many instances one, two, three, would be quite enough, where a half

dozen are struggling for self-support and self-advancement.⁷ Meantime the needs of the unchurched multitudes of the great cities are imperatively calling for mission halls, with organized Christian workers; and hundreds of millions of our fellow-men have never heard the name of their Saviour.

To prove that the unceasing expenditure of means for such multiplication of the denominational forms of Christianity in so many little over-churched communities, new and old, throughout the land, is in accordance with the mind of the Master, would be a hopeless undertaking.

Worse than the waste of money is the waste of men. The hand of God is laid upon a young man in consecration to the ministry of the gospel. The years of preparation are patiently improved. Full of hope and zeal, rejoicing, trembling, he goes forth to tell the Master's message to men. But in his first field he finds himself little more than chaplain to a struggling ecclesiastic household

'I am just now in receipt of a communication from a pastor of unusual mental fairness and good judgment, in which it is stated: "The conditions in the Indian Territory are even worse than the author [Gladden, in "The Christian Pastor"] has given, as to the matter of 'destructive competition.' I was pastor two years in a town of two thousand where there are thirteen church organizations represented—and the town is not especially religious either. . . . The same conditions prevail all over the 'New State.'"

closely hemmed in by competing denominations. The bright, strong days of youth are passing, and where is the great congregation that he can gather and organize in the Lord's cause? The people are there, he is well qualified to serve them, but so many avenues of approach are closed up, and his ministry so needlessly limited and belittled. Perhaps, worst of all, his own nature gradually becomes "subdued to that it works in," and the glory of large-hearted evangelical power departs from his life. He is content to stand well with his brethren, a loyal son of his own Church and available for whatever more eligible position it may have to offer. Who shall give answer for this woeful waste of ministerial resources?^s

Meanwhile a lack of ministers to fill the pulpits of the churches and extend their work is no uncommon matter of complaint. Of recent years particularly the inadequate number of candidates for the ministry has been noted with regret and

^s"Hundreds of abandoned churches, thousands of superfluous organizations, millions of squandered money, hosts of martyr missionaries, proclaim the need of radical reform. Christian coöperation in Church extension is no far-off vision of a formal union; no speculative theory of an ultimate Catholic Church. It is a plain duty, which the Churches as they are now constituted can and ought to do at once." (Hyde, "Outlines of Social Theology," pp. 209, 210.)

anxiety.⁹ Days of fasting and prayer have been observed, that, in accordance with the Master's instructions, the lovers of his cause may pray "the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." The young men of the Church have been admonished to let no worldly ambition drown the inner voice of the Spirit that may be calling them into the ministry of the word. Special speakers have been appointed, here and there, to address them on the subject. Pastors and other office-bearers have been urged to keep on the lookout for promising young men for ministerial service, and parents counseled to show their children the incomparable glory of such a calling. Let all this be done, if wisely, with the heartiest approval. But should it not also be made consistent with the use to which the Church shall put the ministers, called of God, who offer themselves for her service? If it be to build up one congregation of Jesus Christ as against another, creating or perpetuating division where there might be concentration

"For some years past the question of ministerial supply has been a vital one in our Conference. . . . With the very best possible estimate, the presiding elders state that they will need fifteen more men than they shall have. . . . It is a serious condition of affairs when an old Conference, like the Virginia, does not develop enough men to do the necessary work within its own borders, and have some to spare to send to the regions beyond." (Baltimore and Richmond Christian Advocate, October 18, 1906.)

of moral and evangelical endeavor—whose voice has called them into such a harvest?

But waste is a negative idea. The chief evil of denominationalism, as now existing, is positive; and it has to do not with material or even ministerial resources but directly with the spiritual life. The denomination, instead of keeping true to its published creed as a representative of the catholic Church of Christ, comes to be, in the minds of its adherents, unconsciously, a substitute for the Church. Denominational loyalty is appealed to, and the attention of the local congregation is absorbed in the bare effort to maintain itself in the struggle for existence with similar forms of life. Let the fittest survive: the sooner the weak are crushed out the better.¹⁰

¹⁰It is no wonder that the better spirit of Christian bodies should be seeking relief from these unchristian conditions, as in the following examples:

“The purposes of the General Council shall be (5) To prevent the unnecessary multiplication of churches; to unite weak churches of the same neighborhood wherever it is practicable; and to invite and encourage the affiliation with this Council of other Christian bodies cherishing a kindred faith and purpose.” (“Plan of Union between Congregationalists, Methodist Protestants, and United Brethren,” 1905.)

“II. That church extension into destitute communities should be conducted, as far as practicable, according to the following considerations: 1. No community in which any [evangelical] denomination

Now whatever qualities are thus developed, a true Christian humanity is not one of them. Whatever laws are fulfilled, the law of Christ is not fulfilled. The spirit that would lend a helping hand in Jesus' name to all good causes is checked and embarrassed: charity must stay at home. Sundry expedients, some of more than doubtful propriety, are resorted to for the raising of even the least amount of money with which the church can get on. The progress of neighboring churches is watched with a jealous eye. Their losses are not deplored; their successes are not heartily rejoiced in. On the contrary, to see them close their doors in acknowledged failure would excite a secret joy. For does it not mean a wider field for one's own, which is better than they? Littleness of thought and affection is encouraged. The Christian aim is lowered; Christian loyalty is perverted; Christian love is spoiled.¹¹ And as with the local community

has any legitimate claim should be entered by any other denomination through its official agencies without conference with the denomination or denominations having said claims." ("Statement of Principles, Interdenominational Commission of Maine," 1892.)

"Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, writing from the Highlands of Scotland to the *Scottish Review*, tells of worshiping in a village where one hard-working minister with two assistants could "turn the whole parish into a garden of the Lord." But what are the facts? "There are seven Christian congregations, all singing the same psalms, all reading the

so with those widely extended communities, the denominations themselves: they are not, in any sense adequate to satisfy an instructed conscience, fellow-helpers of the truth.

Now such a rehearsal of the defects and failures of the churches is indeed "grievous." One has to force the pen to write it down. Nevertheless it may be "safe." Pleasant or painful, approbative or condemnatory, let all the facts be looked in the face. Then may wise counsel be taken for the remedy of evils. For what does any reasonable man want to know except the truth? and what does any Christian want to promote except the doing of the heavenly Father's will?

same New Testament, and all praying in the name of the same Mediator, but so separated and so alienated, that they will not worship together on Sabbath days, and are scarcely civil to one another on week days."

V

THE CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH: FEDERATION

A GUIDING light in ecclesiastical reinterpretation, with its attendant readjustments, is a true Christian and historic knowledge. To know the tenets and achievements of one's own church only, whether it be a larger or a smaller body, is to incur the risk of degenerating into a sectarian. Let us know the history of the Church of Christ, of "the whole Congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world." It will show the schismatic effect of many a strained or unsound dogma and many an arrogant assumption; for, as already suggested, those who stay, not those who go, are sometimes the real schismatics. But it will also show the unwisdom, if not sinfulness, of more than one actual separation.

Perhaps the most fruitful source of bigotry is lack of knowledge. A secluded community, cut off from the main currents of life and thought that traverse and unify the country at large, becomes provincial; and it is liable to be swept into antagonism to national laws that do not suit its wishes,

or to drift out of sympathy more and more with the nation of which it should feel honored to form a part. Sectarianism is provincialism in the Church. It is a part taking itself to be the whole, or at least becoming self-centered and self-sustained. It is the hand or the foot or the little finger boasting, "Behold, I am the body." There is no proper recognition of the larger, the universal, life. The sectarian bigot knows the history and spirit of his own communion only (in most instances, not even that). But to know just one is to know none; and knowledge is a condition of catholicity.

Knowledge, however, is not a motive: it does nothing. It is only a light upon the road where men are pressing forward under the impulses of the heart. To know Christian history is not in itself to realize the fellowship of Christians. The direct and effectual cure of a sectarian spirit is love; and here the probing knife in self-examination may not be spared. What is it that I like, or *am like*? what am I caring for supremely—our Church order or the order of the kingdom of heaven, our devotional forms or the worship of God, our ministry or Christ's ministry of the gospel, our Church or the Church of the living God?

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." What was Jerusalem? The city of the one Temple, the center and representative of Jehovah's kingdom on earth.

Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of Jehovah,
For an ordinance for Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of Jehovah.¹

That was the Jerusalem to be loved and prayed for. But God has provided a still better thing for his people in the Christian age. Their bond of unity is not a temple, nor a city, nor a history, nor a nationality, nor a tradition, but the very Truth of truth, the crucified and ever-living Christ.

I

Nevertheless it may be urged that the denominational form of Christianity must be accepted as inevitable. The argument is somewhat as follows: It can be imagined that God might so have made men's minds and so have wrought upon their hearts by the grace of his Holy Spirit, and so have given the revelation of himself through the Scriptures and in Jesus Christ, that no important difference of belief, either as to doctrine or polity, would have been possible among the true-minded. But it has not been so. Granted equal sincerity and equal diligence in a company of truth-seeking Christian people, still they will probably not be at one on all great doctrinal and ecclesiological questions. It is through broken views, imperfect knowledge, partial prophesyings, and despite many positive errors, that the Father is training his chil-

¹Ps. cxxii. 4, 6.

dren here for the face-to-face vision hereafter. Therefore, may not these variant types of belief, growing largely out of variant intellectual temperaments, while putting neither party out of the Catholic Church, make it desirable that each should be separately organized in order that it may do the work of Christ according to its own convictions of truth and efficiency?

Waiving the historical view, let us simply contemplate the present situation. Whatever the origin and history of the Christian denominations, they exist as a prominent fact in the Christianity, say, of our own country. Suppose it to be granted that their formation, under the conditions existing at the time, was inevitable. Is their separate existence necessarily interminable? What in all good conscience ought they to do as sister Churches, here and now, relatively to one another?

It must be assumed that those who ask this question are in favor of the closest possible ecclesiastical coöperation. If union be impossible, they would at least have unembarrassed communion. When the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the year 1886, made their proposal of a basis for "the restoration of the organic unity of the Church," they recorded their deep grief at the "sad divisions which affect the Christian Church in our own land," and their "earnest desire that the Saviour's prayer, that we all may be one, may, in its deepest and truest

sense, be speedily fulfilled." When the Joint Committee of the Congregational, the Methodist Protestant, and the United Brethren Churches, in 1903, proposed a general council for the unification of these three Churches, they declared, first of all, as its purpose, "To present to the world some realization of that unity of believers which, in accordance with the prayer of our Lord, seems so desirable among Christian Churches." The immediate object proposed by the bishops was organic unity; by the Joint Committee, federation. But the spirit of both proposals, being that of the wondrous intercessory prayer of Jesus, in which both sought justification, was the same. Let us suppose, therefore, that in this spirit of genuine brotherhood it should be asked, Is the organic union, or even the federation, of the Churches possible?

To illustrate. The Baptist and the Episcopal views of Church organization and the Christian sacraments are held with entire sincerity by men of competent scholarship and unimpeachable loyalty to Christ. Each of these views is held not only as a personal conviction, but also as representing a fiduciary deposit of truth from the Lord, a part of the faith once delivered to the saints, that must be faithfully guarded. Under what conceivable form of organic union, or of federation that was not too attenuated to be of any real service, could these two classes of Christian be-

lievers be now included? Probably under none at all.

If, however, there be no present solution of the problem, still it may be borne in mind that in these opposing beliefs are contained agreements that are far more significant than the disagreements.² And as to these disagreements, are they in their very nature ever-enduring? On one side or the other, or on both, there must needs be something of exaggeration, depreciation, distortion of the truth; but while such things as these appear and disappear, linger and persist, they are not so long-lived after all as the truth itself which they misrepresent. The plants that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has planted will outlive all their fungous growths. Is there no truer insight into Holy Scripture, no larger vision of God in

²If the Presbyterian and the Methodist rather than the Episcopalian and the Baptist had been chosen as illustrative examples, the possibility of union might have been shown by a recent fact—by the proposed unification of the Presbyterian and the Methodist Church (together with the Congregational Churches) of Canada on the basis of a common creed. All the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and the Twenty-five Articles that these Churches thought it needful to set forth as their doctrinal constitution have been included in their one united statement of faith. Some years ago the prediction of such an agreement would by many intelligent persons have been laughed to scorn.

Christ, no deeper and wider knowledge of the divine order, to be given by the Spirit who is leading those who will to follow into all spiritual truth? Even now it may be among us but partly recognized, illumining many minds, the beginning of a clearer and more fruitful day.³

II

At any rate the hearts of Christ's faithful people are yearning for unity and coöperation rather than contending for the pride of organized independence. The Churches are drawing closer together.⁴ It is a sign of the times. It is one of

³"The drawing together of the Churches on the basis of the Bible and its recognized teachings is the most significant thing in Christendom to-day. . . . Ever since the days of Luther the Bible has been the rallying ground of the Protestant world. The first effect of this was a divisive one. . . . But now that same loyalty to the Bible is bringing the Churches together. . . . Bizarre and extraordinary applications of isolated passages meet with no favor in this age of sane and careful Bible study. The Church or sect which builds upon such interpretations can no longer make a strong appeal to the Christian world." (The Christian Advocate, Nashville, July 19, 1906.)

⁴"Recent years have wrought a marked change in the relations of great Christian denominations toward each other. Ecclesiastical controversy has given way to the spirit of Christian unity and catholicity. A closer coöperative fellowship is the universal desire

the watchwords in the air. In England, in Scotland, in Australia, in Canada, in the United States, alike in the Old World and the New, affiliations, federations, or, as in some cases, organic unions, have been a distinguishing mark of the last half century. They are just now more pronounced than ever.⁵

That obstructions should be met with and counter currents of feeling started (as, for example, in the case of the Scottish "Wee Frees"), is only what might have been reasonably expected. But the general course of the interdenominational movement is unmistakable; and the surprising fact is that the obstructions are no greater.

It is not a tendency toward some merely larger

and earnest prayer. All evangelical denominations are purposed to remove as far as possible needless waste and rivalry." (Quadrennial Address of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1906.)

⁵Note among other recent signs (which would have seemed impossible half a century ago) of coöperation, federation, or organic union, in the Evangelical Churches, such as the following: In England the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches (including practically all the Free, or Dissenting, Churches); in Scotland, the union of the United Presbyterian and the Free Church; in Australia, the official proposal and effort to unite all the non-Episcopal Churches; in Canada, the consolidation of the four Presbyterian and the five Methodist Churches into one Presbyterian and one Methodist Church, and the proposed

toleration. That might awaken a suspicion of indifferentism rather than give proof of love or promise of progress. "You come," said an elder to his newly elected pastor, "you come to a united church." And the minister rejoiced in spirit, till the elder added in explanation, "We are *frozen* together." There is a oneness of inactivity, the waveless peace of the ice-bound lake. A man of serious convictions and deep moral earnestness cannot be merely tolerant, simply because he cannot be indifferent. He must be either *for* or *against*.

On the gravestone of an American Puritan of the olden time is written the epitaph:

Let men of God in Church and nation watch
'Gainst such as would a toleration hatch.

consolidation (referred to above) now apparently in process of accomplishment, of these two Churches, together with the Congregational Church; in the United States, the action of the National Council of the Congregational Churches and of the Northern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in seeking closer affiliation with their sister Churches, the conferences now being held for the union of the United Brethren, the Methodist Protestant, and the Congregational Churches, the organic union of the Presbyterian (Northern Assembly) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the closer affiliation of the two Methodist Episcopal Churches, the Christian Endeavor Societies, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, the National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers, the Interchurch Federation Conference.

It is probable that the subject of this memorial couplet sometimes over-exalted expediency or opinion even to the plane of principle and created needless matters of controversy and of conscience; yet the steadfast refusal to yield assent to what one believes to be false or wrong, which is the spirit of the doggerel epitaph, must be approved. It may be believed, however, that the movement from liberty and independence to union in the Churches of to-day finds its best interpretation in a more accurate apprehension of the relation of essentials and nonessentials in the gospel, a quickened sense of human brotherhood, and a keener appreciation of the grace of Christian alliance. It is not humanitarian but human, not careless of theology but Christological.⁶

III

It must begin at each Church's own doors. The ideal, indeed, cannot reach too high or too far. Make it world-wide, that wherever sin has gained possession of a soul grace may be seen much more

“It [the Federation of the Evangelical Free Churches in England] is peculiar in the fact that it is not philanthropic, humanitarian, political, or educational, but essentially ecclesiastical and Christian. Its essential doctrine, as stated in the catechism, is that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only and sufficient center of unity for the living, visible members of the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world.” (Mantle, “Life of Hugh Price Hughes,” p. 146.)

to abound, and Christ's "holy Church universal" to appear in the fullest sense universal, and holy, and *one*. But the method for the realization of any high ideal is that of step by step. *Nil per saltum*. The question of the federation of an evangelical communion with the Eastern or the Roman Church at this time would be little more than an academic exercise. But it is not so as to the communions that are closely affiliated in doctrine and in spirit. Here is the opportunity and the consequent obligation.

The three general methods proposed or actually practiced for the reunion of the Church have been described as (1) Submission, (2) Legislation, (3) Coöperation.⁷

Submission, as a method of reunion, requires that one church shall simply yield itself up to what another imposes as supreme authority. "I heartily join in this prayer for Christian unity," says Archbishop Gibbons, "and gladly would surrender my life for such a consummation. But I tell you that Jesus Christ has pointed out the only means by which this unity can be maintained, viz., the recognition of Peter and his successors as the head of the Church."⁸ Here and there an imaginative or overawed soul will yield to such a claim, but as a basis for the reunion of Christendom it is quite impossible.

⁷Hodge, "Faith and Social Service," p. 255.

⁸"The Faith of Our Fathers," p. 139.

Legislation asks that nearly related Churches, through their highest councils, shall, without the surrender of any vital principle, make such concessions or compromises, and adopt such measures, as will unite them, in federation or in organic union, as a single ecclesiastical body. It is now being approved more than in any previous period of the Church's history, as an effective method.⁹

Coöperation would realize the visible and practical unity of Christian workers. Disregarding peculiarities of doctrine and polity, it gathers Christians of different communions into the fellowship of service, in the name of their one Leader and Lord. The Young Men's Christian Association, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, the National Federation of Churches and Christian Workers, the Interchurch Conference on Federation, are pertinent examples.

Some such alliance in service is practiced to an increasing extent in local communities. Indeed, it is practically forced upon intelligent and faithful churches by the manifest needs of the situation. In the presence of perplexing problems of destitution and suffering, both physical and moral, as in our large cities, and in the face of the organized forces of vice and iniquity—of intemperance, impurity, official corruption, "where Satan's seat is"—how is it possible for the churches, which exemplify the forces of the kingdom of God, to

⁹See above, pp. 188, 189, n.

bear their testimony or do their redeeming work without brotherly coworking? Nor is there need to wait, in this case, for formal authorization from their respective governing assemblies. They have only to work together anywhere, wisely and well, as opportunity offers or occasion demands. And if this Christianity practically applied shall open the way for closer and wider Christian federation, it is so much the more a matter for gratitude and rejoicing.¹⁰

But the local community is the nation in miniature. What it needs is needed in all the land. What is influential in the promotion of its interests is similarly influential in securing the welfare of the whole people. Now a national Church will make its mind and will felt in the ideals, the customs, the lawmaking and law-enforcing of the nation. It has the opportunity to act as a mighty

¹⁰The Federation of Churches in New York City offers a good example of this Christian coöperative effort. Its work for the year 1906, as summarized in a recent number of the *Congregationalist*, is in part as follows: "In eleven months nearly one-fifth of Greater New York has been visited, or over one hundred and ten thousand families. Of Jewish families, sixty-three per cent. had no religious affiliation; of Protestants there were twenty-eight per cent.; and of Roman Catholics only five per cent. Over seven hundred churchless families have been recovered to regularity of worship, and there is a steady yielding to the kindly Christian visitation of this new form of coöperative missionary endeavor."

and universal force for civic righteousness and moral reform. But here the organic union with the State makes the Church something less, in character and position, than a church of Christ, so as to obstruct its opportunity and cripple its power for good. So likewise have the free evangelical churches, by the lack of unity and coöperation, depreciated their opportunity and crippled their power to make the commonwealth, in which they are called of God to stand together for all righteousness, a commonwealth of God. Shorn of love (for after all it is that word that touches the deepest and saddest source of failure), they are degraded into weakness before their embattled enemies. "Only with united voice and with concerted action," says the Interchurch Conference, "can the Church successfully antagonize such evils as the liquor traffic, unscriptural divorce, the desecration of the Lord's Day, and the social evil; or can she hope to solve such problems as arise out of the needs of city evangelization, the relations of capital and labor, and the influx of foreign immigration." The united voice and concerted action, being practicable, are imperative. It would be difficult to interpret otherwise the Lord's command.

But if coöperation is thus obligatory in the home land, it is more manifestly so abroad. Think of the feeble mission stations, surrounded by myriads of the unevangelized, and all the cruel super-

stitutions with all the moral degradation of paganism. In such circumstances, sectarian contentions or offishness and estrangement would indeed offer an open and perpetual invitation to defeat. It would seem to be little less than the burning shame of treason in the very outposts of the Holy War.

Hence the recent instructive examples of co-operative work and of federation in the foreign missionary field.¹¹

But the work is essentially one, the need one, and the law of Christ one, there and here, abroad and at home.¹²

¹¹No country offers a better example than the Japanese Empire. The missions of the six Presbyterian Churches represented in Japan have all united under the name of "The United Church in Japan" (Nippon Kirisuto Kyowai). A similar union has taken place in the three missions of the Anglican Church, and in three of the American Methodist Churches.

"At the Tokio Conference [composed of four hundred and fifty missionaries] in 1900, the spirit of oneness came upon the missionaries assembled, and all were led to reëcho with deeper earnestness than ever before the Master's prayer, 'That they all may be one.' A committee of eighteen was formed, called the Standing Committee of Coöperating Missions in Japan, whose duties are to foster all possible co-operation, to give counsel with regard to the distribution of forces, to prevent misunderstandings, and to promote harmony." (De Forest, "Sunrise in the Sunrise Kingdom," p. 180.)

¹²"We are learning in our day, and it is another of

Great is the unifying power of a common purpose. Have the Christian churches, then, collectively considered, any supreme purpose for which they have been called into existence? There can be but one answer. So far as they are genuinely *Christian* churches, they exist for the purpose of discipling all nations and thus making universally manifest the kingdom of God on earth. Suppose them, then, to work together in every community unto this end. Let the lust of ecclesiastical dominion be brought to shame by the solemn and loving determination to subdue the world unto Jesus Christ. Of necessity they will thereby draw closer together, walking according to the same rule, minding the same thing, and thus unconsciously constraining the world to believe that their common Lord is indeed the One sent forth from God.

IV

An indispensable condition of success in such movements, now taking place, is that their direction shall be from within outward. As in the case of adopting an order of worship, and in numerous similar cases, it is a life striving to "pro-

the glories of foreign missions to have taught us the lesson, that denominations exist for the kingdom of Christ, and by no means the kingdom of Christ for any one denomination. . . . The spirit of comity is the spirit of missions." (Dr. O. E. Brown, in "Missionary Issues of the Twentieth Century," p. 25.)

cure a form to habit in." The form can never successfully impose itself upon the life, but must be molded by it. To unite dissentient religious bodies by the mere force of authoritative leadership, or the mere majority votes of conventions, or in a glow of emotional goodwill unable to give an intelligent account of itself, would be a vain procedure. Might it not repeat the story of the Babel builders, prematurely consolidating their clans about one proud tower? The cost of the hasty is discord; and of the superficial, transiency. It is the consentient action of mind, heart, and conscience that is enduring.

Nevertheless there is much help to be received from without. Crowded conventions may be both informatory and inspirational. Instruction and leadership are necessary; and in every great ecclesiastical movement it is upon the teachers and leaders, not upon the body of the people, that the chief weight of responsibility rests. Shall the leaders wait until the people press them on, and thus cease to be leaders at all?

The heart of Church unity is like-mindedness in Christ. Not authority, nor expediency, nor conventional usage, nor verbal agreements, but a faith of the heart. "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind *in the Lord*.¹³ Here the emphasis of the New Testament is laid. The deep and tender longing of the Saviour for the

¹³Phil. iv. 2.

oneness of his people was for this oneness in himself and the Father.¹⁴ While there was no word spoken concerning an outwardly unified form of government, there was much command and entreaty concerning brotherly love.

Accordingly in the churches of the apostolic and the sub-apostolic age, these two characteristics, a negative and a positive, are noticeable: the absence of any one ecumenical and authoritative government, and the fact of one common intercongregational recognition and communication. For while the apostolic founders and their successors had nothing to say about a universal organic union, they did have very much to say, in imitation of their Lord's example, about the essential Christian unity. In such a cause they would indeed have "gladly surrendered their lives." Because the organic is of no value? Surely not; but because the *Christian* is its life center. First and last, let the heart beat true. The unity of the spirit, in the might of God's own Spirit, is love.

The effect of denominationalism upon many a community is beyond question most unhappy; but federation alone, or organic union alone, would work no radical cure. A wise physician does not wish to see a deep wound heal on the surface first of all. In like manner must the wounds of the Church be healed within, that the outer healing also may be safe and permanent. The intolerable

¹⁴John xvii. 21.

effect of separate jealous and discordant denominations is not due solely to their being separate, but essentially to their being jealous and discordant. Include them within the pale of a single organization: would all men straightway hasten to acknowledge that they were Jesus' disciples, and that he was the One sent from the Father? Not if they were still, as might be the case, jealous and discordant in spirit; not if they were carnal, untruthful, self-seeking; not if they were tricksters in trade or unkind in social intercourse. Not because of mere membership in an undivided Church. It has been said with satirical impatience concerning the idea of the Invisible Church, "Away with such invisible Christianity." But surely organization is neither the only nor the principal way in which Christianity becomes visible. "*Ye are the light of the world.*" "Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your *good works* and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Yet must it ever be remembered that one of these good works, through which the kingdom of heaven becomes a visible fact on earth, is the creating of a more and more perfect religious organism.¹⁵ The children of the kingdom will ever be

¹⁵Nothing could be more directly in the line of this Christian endeavor than the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, recommended as a Plan of Federation by the Interchurch Conference:

seeking, from the first Christian century till that kingdom shall come with universal power, to unify the churches, inwardly and outwardly, into the one catholic Church.

"2. The object of this Federal Council shall be:

"(1) To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church.

"(2) To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.

"(3) To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the Churches.

"(4) To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life."

III

ACTIVITIES

(201)

"Ingenuously reading the apostolic epistles, we recognize—not without reluctance indeed, but with a deep-felt and devout satisfaction—as therein seeing the mind of Christ, that the Christian laity are not merely to be *in* the Church, not merely of it, but that they, with their ministers, are IT."—*Isaac Taylor*.

"The laity make the Church. The gospel knows only the laity. Ministers are only laymen intrusted with a special mission. What is best in the minister is the layman. A Church is rich when it has many active laymen, old and young, men and women."—*Charles Wagner*.

"Go, teach; it is the sublimest work."—*Wyclif to his Poor Priests*.

"All service ranks the same with God—
There is no last or first."

—*Robert Browning*.

"The Christianity that is not philanthropic is as defective as the philanthropy that is not Christian."

"The city is the Gibraltar of our civilization."—*Josiah Strong*.

"None but a pierced hand can hold the scepter of universal empire."—*E. R. Hendrix*.

"The Great Charter of England and the Constitution of the American Union are present, living facts and forces; so, and far more, the Great Commission is true, valid, binding to-day and all days unto the end of time, the supreme law of the Church and charter of her rights."—*J. C. Granbery*.

I

THE FELLOWSHIP OF WORK: LAY ORGANIZATION

THE Church is a spiritual mother: "the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother."¹ But this endearing figure is easily susceptible of misinterpretation. The Church may be regarded as a mother in a sacramentarian sense. Or she may be thought of as a mother of children in their nonage only; whereas the true maternity not only cherishes the infant in his dependence but trains him up for independent activity. The man of fifty, in all the glory of matured strength, will have as filial a spirit as when a child; but thanks to his parents' love and care, he has long been able to act for himself, doing a man's work in the world. Motherhood is a life-giving: well was the first woman named Eve, or Life. But life is realized in growth, fruitage, action. The true mother-love is too wise to be indulgent; and a faithful church will bind the armor upon all her sons and send them forth to the battles of the Lord.

The word "pastor," or *shepherd*, is liable to a similar misuse. While fitly representing one important relation of minister and people, it may

¹Gal. iv. 26.

keep other and equally vital relations out of mind. This ministerial title, though used as such only once in the whole Testament,² has come into such common use in the modern Church that both minister and people may sometimes need to be reminded that, in the fulfillment of their respective callings, he must become much more than a shepherd, and they much more than a flock.³ A shepherd does all, his flock nothing. But the minister is also an architect and the people the builders, a foreman and the people the workmen.

I

First of all, the Church of Christ is a brotherhood of believers; then of worshipers, of witnesses, of workers. Without the faith of the Son of God it could never have arisen and would have no reason to be; and such a faith will express itself in Christian worship and testimony. But it will also

²Eph. iv. 11.

³"It is here [in the work of the Church] that the professional one-man ministry has wrought most havoc with democracy. In many of our churches, particularly the smaller, the minister has done everything except pay the bills, and often he has helped to do that. The members have settled down comfortably to letting him do everything. Was not that what they employed him for? The whole conception of the *church* as a working body has been lost." (Heermance, "Democracy in the Church," 152.)

pass through love into service; and thus the worshipping and witnessing Church will become a working Church. Its highest note of brotherhood will be the brotherhood of industry; its perfected communion, the strong and healthful fellowship of work.⁴

This being true, one is prepared to find the principle of the division of labor (which in fact is only another name for organization) illustrated in the Church.

A universal sign of advancing life is the increasing differentiation of function. That is a very rudimentary sort of animal in which the whole body breathes, digests, and responds to irritation. Let the lump of sensitive matter develop organs, one after another, each to do its own work in correlation with its fellows, and the whole working capacity will be increased many fold. Here, as in the ant-hill and the beehive, may be found a sub-human forecast of human society. See its fulfillment in every sphere of the civilized world's industry—on the farm, in the marts of trade, in the factory. Ignoring the division of labor, no industrial establishment could even begin to be. Ceasing midway to make application of it would be inconsistent with the highest perfection and the largest success.

But the Church has not yet given as bright and

⁴Gal. vi. 1-10.

full an illustration of this organic principle as might have been expected. In many instances, and through long ages, a few men were set apart as office-bearers, and the rest left practically to their own impulses without any common understanding as to what work they should undertake. These officers were, for the most part, the clergy and their assistants, no serious attempt having been made to organize the laity for service.

All will admit that not only the clerical but the Christian life is for service, that in this respect there is no essential difference between the two but both alike are *ministerial*; and moreover that the world's need is urgent and measureless. Nor is it possible to estimate the greatness of the work that even the least Christian believer may do. "He," not one of the Twelve, but anybody, "that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do."⁵ But the service of the laity has not usually been taken into account sufficiently to be brought under any well-defined regulation. And through this defectiveness of organization the priestly sentiment is fostered, even in evangelical communions, that somehow the clergy are the Church. Let them be ordained and financially supported to carry on the work of God in the world. Let them shep-

⁵John xiv. 12.

herd their flock (and live as they may off the fleece)—this, at least, the feature of their office that overshadows every other.

II

Such is not the New Testament idea. Indeed, the difference between the two is heaven-wide. It is true, we may look in vain through the New Testament for any description of a thoroughly organized Church; but the principles and actual examples which we do find make it clear that the field for the organizing of Christian service is the whole congregation, and not some specific and select part of it.

In the teaching of Jesus the economy of the Church is seen as that of a fair and ordered household in which each several servant has his own part to perform. To the household not as a body but individually, “to each one (*ἐκάστῳ*, to the men-servants and to the maid-servants, to every one separately) his work,”*—for the King and the coming of the kingdom.

In the Pauline epistles it is shown that where the Christians were, there was the Church. And unto them all, without any such distinction of clergy and laity as arose later, were communicated certain spiritual gifts, to be used, in an orderly manner, as opportunity offered, in minis-

*Mark xiii. 34. Cf. Matt. xxv. 14, 15.

tration to all men, and especially to the household of faith. No Christian is excluded from some one of the many offices or lines of service. "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal": the word of wisdom (*σοφία*, probably truth as received through scholarly and devout meditation), the word of knowledge (*γνῶσις*, probably truth as received through intuition), faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits (the power to judge religious teachers—to recognize "truth," or the lack of it, "through personality"), tongues, interpretation of tongues. "All these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will."⁷

When in the same letter to the Corinthians the Apostle enumerates the divers gifts and callings tending to take form and organize themselves into offices, he mentions not only apostles, prophets, and teachers, but among various others, "helps" and "governments."⁸ Much learned inquiry has been devoted to the last two terms, to discover what particular forms of ministration they are intended to connote. But their very vagueness and generality is significant; for it suggests that there is some form of service, not unworthy to be named in connection with the very highest, that every Chris-

⁷ 1 Cor. xii. 7-11. Cf. Rom. xii. 4-8.

⁸ 1 Cor. xii. 27-30.

tian has been set in the Church to render. "Apostles," "helps," "governments."

It would be as erroneous to say that because some one apostle—such as Peter or Paul—was chief, therefore the rest were not sent ones at all, as to say that because some one member of an apostolic Christian society was by way of preëminence a minister, therefore the rest had no specific ministry to fulfill. In idea all without exception were ministers. All should go among their fellows to give rather than to get.

III

Let it be noted that even preaching, as indicated by such terms as "word of wisdom," "word of knowledge," "prophet," "teacher," appears as a personal, non-official function. There was "liberty of prophesying." No one needed to be set apart by the laying on of hands, or by any ceremony or form of words, as a preacher. One of Paul's desires for the Christians of Corinth was that they might all "prophesy."⁹ No congregational vote needed to be taken. Anybody to whom the word of God came was free to speak it, before the congregation or elsewhere. So, as these Christian witnesses went about, whether driven by persecution, or on secular business, or marching as soldiers, or led as slaves, or for the express purpose of evan-

⁹1 Cor. xiv. 5.

gelism, on far journeys perhaps, passing along the great military roads that threaded the Roman Empire, or along that greater highway the Mediterranean Sea, they made known, in widely separated places, the Name in which they had found for themselves the joy of a new and blessed life.

Think of an Old Testament prophet waiting for ordination or any sort of official authorization, before uttering the message that Jehovah had given him for the people. The priest, indeed, must be formally inducted into his office, but not the prophet. So, likewise, with the New Testament prophet, or preacher. And as to the New Testament priest—there was none.

So we read in the Acts of the Apostles of the similar acts of others than the apostles. Who, for example, did the preaching at Pentecost? Not the Apostle Peter alone; but they “were *all* filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Stephen preached Jesus as Christ with a boldness that incited persecution and cost him his life. Those who were scattered abroad by the same persecution “went about preaching the word.”¹⁰ Certain Cyprians and Cyrenians went as far as Antioch, and there “spoke unto the Greeks also preaching the Lord Jesus.”¹¹ Philip, one of the

¹⁰Acts viii. 4. ¹¹Acts xi. 20.

Seven, did the work of an evangelist in Samaria and in various towns of the Mediterranean coast plain; and his daughters prophesied.¹² Aquila and his wife Priscilla, as spiritual teachers, took the learned preacher Apollos and instructed him in the way of Christ more perfectly.¹³

The explanation of it all was given by Peter, on the birthday of the Church of the New Covenant, when he declared the prophecy¹⁴ to be fulfilling, that on the sons and daughters, on the young men and the old men, on men-servants and women-servants, the Spirit should be poured forth, and they should prophesy. It was the truth of a universal prophetism taking form for the world's evangelization.

Let it be noted, however, that the men and women who were gifted with edifying speech before the congregation would be recognized without formal appointment as preachers or teachers. The service which they were able to render they would be expected to render, while the presumptuous and the unqualified would be rejected.¹⁵

Thus would arise a real, though informal, ministry of preaching in the Christian assembly. A good illustrative modern example might be found in the Society of Friends. Here every act of true preaching is believed to be prompted immediately

¹²Acts viii.; xxi. 9. ¹³Acts xviii. 24-28. ¹⁴Joel ii. 28.

¹⁵1 Thess. v. 21; 1 John iv. 1; Rev. ii. 2.

by the Holy Spirit, by whom it may be borne in upon the mind of any Christian, young or old, man or woman, at any time or place, to speak some word of God; and the inference is drawn that ministers of the gospel are not to be designated by any human authority. No ordination, no license, no vote is given. And yet, as a matter of fact, certain men and women rather than others do become ministers, and are distinctly known and published as such.

Indeed, it is a Quaker custom to record in the books of the "Monthly Meeting" the names of those persons, men or women, who, by their edifying speech from time to time in the congregation, have gained common recognition as ministers of God's word.¹⁶

This lay evangelism (as we perhaps would call it) did not cease with the death of the twelve apostles. In the meager reports of the sub-apostolic Church are notices of preachers who are recognized under the name of "apostles," "prophets," "teachers," not because of any ordination or human appointment, but because of the fruits of the Spirit shown in their speech and conduct. They were chiefly itinerant. And they had a wide field in which to labor; for Rome had done what Alex-

¹⁶Barclay, "Theological Theses," Prop. X.; McClintock and Strong's "Cyclopedia," Art. Friends; Telford, "History of Lay Preaching," pp. 125, 126.

ander the Great in his day essayed to do—had subdued the nations into the unity of a common government, breaking down the barriers between land and land. There had been providentially prepared for the itinerants, also, a common and suitable language, the Greek, in which to clothe their message. So they went about in the Master's name, and as they went, preached.

A singularly valued and influential form of service, as we learn from various sources, was this "lay" preaching of the sub-apostolic age. "Concerning the apostles and prophets," says the *Didache*, "according to the decree of the gospel, thus do. Let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord."¹⁷ That indeed would be a glad and reverent reception, which no one of them would dare ask for himself—"received as the Lord."

IV

But when it is remembered that the best things are precisely those that are most grievously abused, it will not be surprising that the name of "prophet" and "teacher" was sometimes taken by idle run-abouts, with selfish motives. Already in the New Testament times a warning against self-appointed teachers was called for. "Be not many teachers, my brethren," says James in his Epistle,

¹⁷*Didache*, c. XI.

"knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment."¹⁸

The Church in Ephesus is commended for trying those who "call themselves apostles, and they are not,"¹⁹ and finding them liars. In the *Didache*, also, while enjoined under an awful sanction, not to "try or judge" the true prophet who had proved himself to be such, the churches are warned against pretenders; and certain tests are prescribed for discrimination between the false and the true prophets.²⁰

In the later writings, even of the second century, the allusions to itinerants disappear. The ministry has become predominantly or altogether local, and consequently less missionary in character. Moreover, the bishop, or regularly elected pastor, is coming to claim the preaching of the gospel as peculiarly a function of his official position.

Nevertheless lay preaching continues, a well-marked though decreasing evangelistic force, throughout these early days of the Catholic Church. Celsus, as quoted by Origen in his "Reply,"²¹ scoffingly declares that "workers in wool and leather, and fullers, and persons of the most uninstructed and rustic character" were harangu-

¹⁸Chap. iii. 1.

¹⁹Rev. ii. 2. Cf. Acts xx. 30; 2 Cor. xi. 14; 1 John iv. 1.

²⁰*Didache*, c. XI. ²¹"Against Celsus," cc. 55-58.

ing the boys, young men, and women on the tenets of the gospel—which, being interpreted, means a fervid and effective, though sometimes doubtless crude or extravagant, lay evangelism in the latter half of the second century.

But the initial movements toward lay organization were arrested through the encroachments of officialism. The officers tended to become the active Church, and the people receivers only. This tendency reached its climax in the hierarchy. And when it is borne in mind that side by side with sacerdotalism came *multitudinism*, obliterating the distinction between the Church and the world, it will readily be seen that the apostolic principle of the Church as an assembly of renewed souls, all at work, each using his proper gift for the welfare of the whole body and the advancement of the common cause, was no longer held in honor. The people were invited less and less to participate in organized work and enterprise. It was the spirit of the prevalent ecclesiasticism to retain them in the infantile stage of development, without promise of promotion to the responsibilities of manhood.

Some relief was afforded by the monastery. For in this essentially lay institution the monk had certain regular work assigned him for the outside world, as a transcriber or a teacher or a bread-giver or a missionary, and thus found membership in a fraternity at once of recluses and

workers. Even the zealous preaching friars of later times might be either priests or laymen. Francis of Assisi himself was only a deacon. It was the true idea of the working Church, forced into partial and unchristian methods of self-realization—and ending in disaster.

V

Protestantism itself was slow to revive the New Testament conception of the working Church. Its distinctly conscious purpose was to win for the laity their rights, rather than provide them their opportunities, and organize them into a fellowship of work. Elders, appointed as the minister's associates, were specifically *ruling* elders. Deacons, indeed, were laymen, and were charged with a work of beneficence. But the idea of calling into requisition the regular services of the laity as a body, does not appear. The minister, no longer a priest, had become a well-qualified teacher, but not as yet distinctly a director of congregational activities.

As to lay preaching among Protestants, however, in the congregations of the Independents and the Baptists it was by no means rare. In the time of the Commonwealth it became notably prevalent among the soldiers of Cromwell's army. Often, no doubt, it deserved the ridicule that was so freely expended upon it because of the

grotesque fanaticism of the preachers. Yet one may question whether its faults in this direction were really more injurious to the cause of true religion than were those of the ordained ministry of the churches in certain other directions. Richard Baxter, pained by its excesses, deplored the lay preaching of that day: the Lord Protector defended it on Scripture principles—"I hope He that ascended up on high may give His gifts to whom He pleases; and if those gifts be the seal of mission, be not you envious though Eldad and Medad prophesy."

But the first conspicuous example of the organized laity in modern Christianity was furnished by Methodism. The United Societies were formed, it is true, for the simple purpose of "spreading scriptural holiness." The whole life of their founder was in attestation of this purpose. No man of his age was worthier of the name "saint," greatly as it would have grieved him to be called by such a title. But Wesley's holiness of character was no less pronounced in its positive than in its negative aspects. The story of his diligence in doing good, had it come down through tradition from ancient or mediæval times, would have been rejected as incredible. And as he devoted his own powers without stint to the benefit of his fellow-men, so he would fain be able to say of "the people called Methodists," that they were "all at it, and always at it."

It was no wonder, therefore, that in the Societies a strong emphasis was laid upon Christian work. One of the conditions of continuance in membership was constant ministration, as opportunity offered, to both the physical and the spiritual wants of men. Nor was the founder's directive and governing faculty satisfied with so general a rule. As occasion suggested from time to time the common beneficent energy and effort must be organized. Class leaders were appointed as sub-pastors, to watch over the little companies committed to their care, as they that must give account. Lay preachers, both local and itinerant, were authorized to minister in the congregation. Lay prayer meetings, in which the gifts of prayer, counsel, and exhortation might be exercised, were instituted. Regular contributions of money were made by the entire membership. Stewards were placed over the funds thus created, to pay the Society expenses and relieve the wants of the sick and the poor. As the steward's assistants, visitors of the sick were appointed. The ideal whose realization this economy sought to promote was unquestionably that of the organized ministering Church.²²

²²"Wesley's institute has a high merit on this ground—that social organization so thoroughly pervades it, and is its very soul, and is carried out from its center to its extremities, taking hold of, assim-

Within the last fifty years the endeavor to give economic embodiment to this idea of the working Church has become general.²³

There was a time, in the days of our remote ancestors, when the military chieftain fought with his own sword at the head of his troops in the

lating, and employing absolutely every individual enrolled on its lists." (Isaac Taylor, "Wesley and Methodism," pp. 248, 249.)

"Our ministerial system presupposes and requires lay labor of many kinds. At least three-fourths of our meetings have been and are conducted by laymen. . . . The danger of Methodism, now and in the future, is that of settling down in respectable and prosperous churches, having good preaching, singing, and attendance, and paying to get the work done vicariously by professional workers, which ought to be done by themselves." (Mr. T. H. Bainbridge, "Address" in the First Ecumenical Methodist Conference, 1881, p. 424.)

Cf. Telford, "History of Lay Preaching," Chap. V.

²³But not as notably earnest, persistent, and successful thus far as it ought to be and will become. "The greatest undeveloped resources in the Christian Church to-day are the unused activities and powers of the laymen. There are about eight millions of them in the Protestant Churches of America. Only a very small fraction are actively engaged in the work of propagating the gospel." (J. Campbell White, "Address" at Volunteer Student Convention, 1906.)

The Northern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, at its last meeting (1906), took action looking toward the organizing of the men of all its congregations into a great united brotherhood of lay workers.

thickest of the fight. Now he is seen taking his place at some point of observation to direct the movements of the army. There was a time, not two centuries ago, when the manufacturer—say, of woolen cloth or of shoes—wrought with his own hands, one or more apprentices or journey-men perhaps at his side, each workman producing, or learning to produce, the complete article. Now he stands at the head of an industrial establishment, with its various departments, to devise plans, furnish materials, and superintend his corps of sub-managers and workmen. Somewhat similar has been the process of change in the Christian pastorate. The pastor, while still a genuine *pastor*, is becoming distinctly more than in preceding generations the leader of a little modern army, the superintendent of an industrial establishment.

Shall it be asserted, then, that in our time the sense of personal responsibility for the salvation of men is deeper, or the love of Christians for their neighbors more real, or the passion for souls less exceptional than formerly? Such an assertion could not be proved. Neither can it be shown that the pulpit is more faithful than formerly in its appeals for love and service toward the world in Christ's name. It may be, indeed, that in the earlier half of the nineteenth century, as compared with the latter half, greater stress was laid upon the saving of one's own soul and less upon the saving of the souls of others; and that accord-

ingly the Church was looked upon as the ark of safety for the elect rather than as a ship on the wide waters of the world with its sails set to every breeze that blows, in the effort to gain and carry all possible passengers. Where the pulpit teaching was embarrassed with unteachable doctrines of election, the narrower view would be inevitable.

Besides, it can hardly be denied that in the teaching of the churches generally there has been an enlargement of the thought of personal salvation as a deliverance out of sin and into the love of God and man. We would fain believe that the Spirit of truth is thus leading his pupils into all the truth, still revealing, as through communion with him they are made able to receive, the deeper things of God's word.

It is certain at least that the expression of the idea of service in the Churches is becoming larger and more varied.

O Lord, we most of all give thanks
That this thy world is incomplete,
That battle calls our marshaled ranks,
That work awaits our hands and feet.

Organization is attending more closely upon inspiration. The Sunday Schools, the Young People's Societies, the Woman's Boards of Missions, Aid Societies, Mothers' Meetings, Mission Schools, Industrial Classes, and many Unions, Leagues, Brotherhoods, Guilds, and Committees, are the signs of this increasing organization of the laity

—men and women—for the Lord's work in an age of luxury and want, of mammon worship and vagrants.

Nor need the layman think of his position, compared with that of the minister, as wholly disadvantageous. In one important respect at least the advantage is in his favor. His work is non-official. Concerning the minister's service men may say, It is his professional duty, which he is paid to perform. But no such disparaging thought can intrude to blunt the edge of the private Christian's spiritual or beneficent work. Why should he give time and labor to doing good, unless his heart be in it? People will acknowledge, without silently discounting, his sincerity and goodness.

VI

Thorough organization for service is too particular and minute a matter for synodical regulation. It can be accomplished only by each local congregation for itself. In every case it will be brought about and perfected by one man—the pastor. Is he fully awake to the demands of the pastoral office? He will not be satisfied till every member of the church has some recognized place, however simple the duties it calls for, in his plan of operations. He will understand that the ascended Christ “gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors

and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints *unto the work of ministering.*"²⁴ This "perfecting of the saints," one and all, as ministers, will involve on his part not only teaching and excitation, but the often more difficult task of training and directorship.²⁵ Very probably it might be easier for him to teach a Sunday-school class, but he knows it to be better that he should instruct and train the Sunday-school teachers themselves. He will prove a personal friend to the young people, but an object ever kept in view will be to get them to speak and pray and read the Scriptures in their own meetings, to help one another, and, like Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, to go out and bring their fellows to Jesus. His pastoral visits will be multiplied by the appointment of deaconesses and committees of visitation to the strangers in the community, the afflicted, and the unchurched. It will not be "meet" for him to "serve tables," but he will see that the congregation shall look out for itself suitable financial servants. For each one's own sake, as well as for the promotion of the gen-

²⁴Eph. iv. 11, 12.

²⁵"To the sermon I would assign the highest place in Christian instruction and inspiration. . . . Not less preaching, but more; not less learning, but more; not less eloquence, but more; but, above all present human instruments, ability to put a church to work in its community, is the need." (Thwing, "The Working Church," pp. 20, 21.)

eral good, even the most poorly gifted, even the youngest child, will be counted worthy of recognition as a part of the working force of the church. Shall any less thoroughgoing principle or any lower ideal be accepted? "*According as each hath received* a gift, ministering it among yourselves."²⁶ "*To each one his work.*"

It is a gratuitous service. "Freely ye received; freely give."²⁷ Jesus taught, indeed, that the laborer is worthy of his hire:²⁸ but the hire of which he spoke was not a stipulated price for value received: it was food and lodging needed by the traveling evangelist and kindly offered by the people to whom he came. The noble things of life are not wrought for pay: they are done through the higher enthusiasm of duty and love. It is not for fifteen dollars a month that the patriot soldier faces the iron storm of battle. It is not for a salary that the lover of science and humanity spends the days of the years of his life in the laboratory, searching out nature's secrets for the wide world's use and weal. So the vast Christian brotherhood that are doing the Church's work because they believe it to be Christ's work, are not in this cause for material support or money making. They are *giving* their money as well as their labor, hoping for no return.

²⁶1 Pet. iv. 10. ²⁷Matt. x. 8.

²⁸Luke x. 7. In Matt. x. 10 the word is "the laborer is worthy of his food (τροφῆς)."

Of the Christian ministry, however, it has been said with unimpeachable authority that "they who proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel";²⁹ and "let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things."³⁰ Does not this make ministers an exception to the rule of gratuitous service? On the contrary, they should be its brightest examples. When permitted to support themselves, their preaching services are rendered, like those of a Sunday-school superintendent or any other worker, without "compensation." To utter the living truth which the Spirit reveals in the heart, and declare to men the gospel of the remission of sins, on condition that the preaching shall be paid for with so much money, is to be a pretender and a false prophet.³¹ Only when a congregation requires that the minister shall devote his whole time to the work of the ministry does it engage to

²⁹1 Cor. ix. 14. The Apostle says "even so did the Lord [Jesus]" ordain this. Cf. the passages quoted above, Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7.

³⁰Gal. vi. 6.

³¹"The man who seems to have the Spirit exalts himself, and wishes to have the first seat, . . . and takes rewards for his prophecy; and if he does not receive rewards he does not prophesy. Can, then, the Divine Spirit take rewards and prophesy? It is not possible that the Spirit of God should do this, but prophets of this character are possessed of an earthly spirit." (Hermas, "Pastor, Mandata," XI.)

care meantime for his temporal wants. Does it fail in this duty? His ministerial commission is not thereby rendered invalid. It was invalid from the first unless it were received from on high; and if it be indeed from God, to him only may it be surrendered.³²

With or without pecuniary maintenance, the true apostle, prophet, teacher will make full proof, according to ability and opportunity, of the ministry which he has "*received of the Lord Jesus.*" In the light of a spirit of faith and love will the Divine ordinance, that those who preach the gos-

³²The example of Paul is here, as in so many things, a clear and shining light. Delivering to the Corinthians the Lord's commandment that those who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel, he reminds them that, as for himself, he "*did not use this right,*" in Corinth, lest, under the existing circumstances, he might cause "*hindrance to the gospel of Christ.*" He would "*bear all things*" rather than do that. (1 Cor. ix. 12.) In like manner he asks the Thessalonians to remember that on his first visit to them he and his fellow-evangelists worked, night and day, that they might preach the gospel without making themselves a burden to any of their converts—though they might justly have "*been burdensome as apostles of Christ.*" (1 Thess. ii. 6, 9.) Nevertheless he did, in other cases, receive voluntary contributions from churches he had served, "*taking wages of them,*"—for example, of the Church in Philippi,—and with the warmest Christian courtesy did he acknowledge these "*wages.*" (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9; Phil. iv. 11-18.)

pel shall live of the gospel, find its interpretation. It is the same spirit which from the beginning has prompted whatever is best in both the work and the polity of the Christian Church.

VII

The most widely extended form of lay organization for service in the modern Church is the Sunday school. Imagine the loss of religious life and activity that would ensue were this institution abolished. Originating with a layman, its first teachers four women, it has continued through all its marvelous course of development to organize the laity in the work of biblical teaching and evangelization. Could they be honored with any higher functions? And as to the superintendency of a Sunday school, it would tax any imagination to conceive of an office of larger opportunities, with their resulting inspiration and responsibility, for the Christian layman.

Who are more trusted than the superintendent and teachers of the Sunday school? Unto their instruction and moral influence the impressionable mind of the child is committed Sunday after Sunday. Looking at the matter abstractly, one would say that such instructors are too poorly qualified to justify their undertaking. For many of them are young men and women without either experience or extraordinary gifts and character, and

with practically no training for their high office. Training *they should have* at the hands of the church which employs them. Yet, after the apostolic model, the faithful ones are using such gifts as they possess to do such work as seems demanded at their hands; giving, though never so imperfectly, what has been freely given to them; many workers, one work. And here is the secret of the Church's ever-increasing achievement through the Sunday school.³³ Infinitely significant is their service of Christly love: "Whoso receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me."³⁴ Upon their faces some time shall rest the fadeless glory of heaven: "They that be wise [margin, *the teachers*] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."³⁵

A more recent movement is the Young People's Societies. In Great Britain it is represented by various guilds for the promotion of religious culture and usefulness. In our own country, beginning in pronounced and effective form in the year

³³"The ordinary Sunday school is more closely modeled upon the meeting of the primitive Christians than is the gathering of saints for the Sunday morning preaching service. . . . It has an independent life that survives and even flourishes during a long pastoral interregnum. Is this because it conforms more nearly to the apostolic conception of the church than the church itself does?" (Judson, "The Institutional Church," pp. 104, 105.)

³⁴Matt. xviii. 5. ³⁵Dan. xii. 3.

1881 with the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, it has made rapid progress in all the Churches.

As the Sunday school is especially to teach, so the Young People's Societies, as supplementary institutions, are especially to train for Christian work. All members are under obligation to take part in the meetings, and to do whatever outside work may be assigned them. The organizations have been laid out along broad, comprehensive lines of Christian life and service. Not only are meetings to be held for prayer, Scripture reading, testimony, and the discussion of religious topics, but reading courses are followed and beneficent work, "charity and help," undertaken in the community. The obstacles to success are not few nor slight; but the present generation has made no other such positive and prominent endeavor to train for the working church in all Christian communions, as that which has taken form in the various Young People's Societies.

Gathered about the suffering Christ, in the Upper Room, receiving from his hand the bread and cup of the Last Supper, the apostles represented not the office-bearers of the Church, but the Church itself. All Christian disciples, as well as these eleven, were to be partakers of that holy communion. Gathered about the risen Christ, on the Mount of Ascension, receiving from his

lips the Great Commission, these same apostles represented not the office-bearers of the Church, but its witness-bearers, the Church itself. All Christian disciples, as well as these eleven, were to be partakers in that holy evangelism.

It is this personal, voluntary, *common* service that is to be organized.

II

FUNCTION: PROCLAIMING, TEACHING, SPIRITUAL NURTURE

FUNCTION may be described as the proper action of a vital power. The term is applied to nothing below the realm of the living; but within this realm its range of application is very wide—say, from the absorption of moisture by the root of a plant to the execution of national laws by the president of a world-power. For it is used to represent the action not only of individuals as such, but also of organizations—as, for instance, a board of trust, a legislature, a nation, a church.

But since organizations have no actual existence save in the person of the individuals that compose them, the action of an organization is simply the combined action of these constituent individuals, or the representative action of a certain number of them. So, it is to be remembered that there is no ideal company of Christians or of Christian ministers somehow performing mysterious ecclesiastical functions. It is simply a question of what each individual Church member is intended to do for the coming of Christ's kingdom. Not, indeed, what he is to do as an independent individual, but what he is to do in con-

junction with his fellow-Christians—when, for example, all alike contribute to the extension of the gospel or seek to win men to Christ; or through some representative—as when there is one who stands before the congregation to preach, while the rest sustain him with sympathy, prayer, and material maintenance.

I

In the New Testament churches, what a man did for the good of others with the truth which he had received, was determined by two things—by gifts and love. “Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.”¹

These gifts were diverse powers of thought, speech, prayer, healing, leadership, helpful giving, and government, graciously imparted to Christ’s people in the apostolic age, for the common service. “Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given us, whether prophecy, . . . or ministry, . . . or he that exhorteth, . . . he that giveth, . . . he that ruleth, . . . he that sheweth mercy.”² The gift itself constituted a call to the appropriate ministration; it was bestowed not as idle riches, but for use; it was the voice of God saying to its recipient, “Go, work thus in my kingdom.”

Let us not conceive of such charisms, however, as purely extraordinary and supernatural. This

¹Rom. xii. 6-10; 1 Cor. xiv. 1. ²Rom. xii. 6-8.

would be equally erroneous with the opposite extreme of supposing them to have been merely natural talents. By whatever of miracle they were accompanied as signs that, in the power of the Spirit, Christ had come again, and was present in his congregations, the substance of them, we may believe, was the God-given natural capacities, powers, talents of the soul, quickened and exalted by the promised Spirit of life. Certainly the natural powers of observation and good judgment were to be used in connection with the exercise of even the very highest of them all: "Let all things be done unto edifying. . . . And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."³

The same Holy Spirit, fitting men and women for service by the communication of his gracious gifts, is in the Church of to-day. Natural talents, although, equally with these charisms, the bestowments of God's creative love, do not suffice. Nor can any consecrating rite, any baptism or ordination, make them sufficient. They must be Divinely touched unto newness of life. They must be enkindled from on high. Then it will be as if with the soul itself they were born anew.

The natural gift of speech will become a power to preach the word of God as otherwise neither scholar nor orator could ever preach it, or to offer prayer that will interpret the unspoken aspirations

³1 Cor. xiv. 26, 32.

of all fellow-worshippers. The natural gift of insight will become a power of spiritual discernment which may be lacking in the affluent child of genius or the very princes of knowledge and thought. The natural gift of song will become a power to quicken the immortal yearnings of the soul with a sense of the Saviour's love and the glory of the Eternal. The natural gift of ministration to the sick or the needy will become a healing and uplifting power, as if the Divine Healer himself were present, as if the Divine Giver himself were communicating his riches, in the person of his like-minded servant. The natural gift of government will become a prophet's power of rule and leadership, "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds."

Is any child of God excluded from this administration of spiritual gifts? In reality, not one. There are many who have none of them in an extraordinary degree; but just as all persons possess natural endowments—five "talents," two, one—so likewise are the endowments of all enriched by the gifts of grace. It is only in a relative sense that any human being is ungifted, and only in the same sense that any spiritually renewed soul is destitute of the charisms of the Holy Spirit. "*If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.*"⁴

However small the gift, it will be put to use, and in the "more excellent way," when thrilled through with the spirit of love. I have heard a modest Christian hero tell: "I said to myself, I have no special gift to preach; but I have feet, I can walk, and I have hands, I can distribute the Scriptures." For many years he has been walking and distributing the Scriptures, as an honored agent of the American Bible Society in a far-away, unevangelized land. Verily his are feet "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," and hands in which is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The greatest of economists, as well as the greatest of givers, is the heart of love. It makes everything tell.

II

If now it be asked, What are the functions of the Church?—her work, enterprise, collective activities—the answer is suggested in a metaphor that has become "a household word in all Christian theology": The Church is the body of Christ, and as such it is the organ through which his work in the world is to be done.⁵

Visible on earth, in his own flesh and blood, for a few sinless years, the Son did the work of the Father. Four comprehensive words may be taken as representing it all—namely, *proclamation*,

⁵Eph. i. 22, 23; Col. i. 18, 24.

teaching, beneficence, spiritual nurture. "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, *teaching* in their synagogues, and *preaching* the gospel of the kingdom, and *healing* all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people." "*Little children, yet a little while I am with you.*"⁶ Such in brief was the personal ministry of Jesus; and essentially the same ministry it is his declared will to continue through the Church, which is his body, unto the end of time.

More prominent in the Gospels than the institution of baptism or the Lord's Supper, or even of the Church itself, is the institution of Christian *preaching*. It was for this ministry that the Twelve were chosen, taught, and trained: "He appointed twelve that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."⁷ Afterwards out of the glory of the Father he shed upon them the baptism of fire, whereby those who from the beginning had been "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" were fully empowered as his witness-bearers. Thus the day of Pentecost, which marks the second coming of Christ to "his own," marks at the same time the complete institution and endowment of the ministry of proclamation, which shall be perpetuated throughout the age of the word and the Spirit.

Upon others at that same time and later the

⁶Matt. iv. 23: John xiii. 33. ⁷Mark iii. 14.

hand of the ascended Christ was laid in vocation and command to proclaim the gospel—upon Stephen and Philip and Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus, and upon many whose names, unknown on earth, are written in the book of life. The essential thing was that they should truly go forth with the hand of the Lord upon them. “As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.”⁸ “How shall they preach except they be sent?”⁹ Not waiting to be sought by the people, they went as *apostles*.

Nevertheless there is here a matter of ecclesiastical polity. For, as we have seen, it is the part of the Christian congregation to judge whether the men who rise up among them, or would go out from them, as proclaimers of Christ's gospel, are indeed his sent ones. Refusing any would-be prophets, the Church must give its indorsement to those whom it accepts as messengers of God. And in some form or other it has always undertaken to do so. In the Evangelical Churches of the present day, while large liberty is allowed any reputable Christian who would speak the word of God in the congregation, yet some solemn form of licensure to preach, and of ordination to a ministry that includes the preaching of the gospel, is universally observed. It may be a particular congregation acting for itself, or a presbytery of ministers and elders, or a conference of ministers and

⁸John xvii. 18. ⁹Rom. x. 15.

lay delegates, or a single Church officer, as a bishop, by whom the authorization is given; but in every case the procedure is based, at least theoretically, on the principle that a Church of Christ, acting either directly or through representatives, receives into its catholic and apostolic ministry a man already called thereunto by the voice of God.¹⁰

"I delivered unto you first of all," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised up on the third day according to the Scriptures."¹¹ Now if these are facts, it is no slight thing whether or not they be published. They constitute an evangel that has power to make all things new. Duty, privilege, relationship to God, outlook into the future, all are vitally affected by them. Every man for whom Christ died is entitled to hear the Name whereby he must be saved. But much also depends upon the telling. The gospel is to be known by experience and conviction in the hearts of its heralds. Let them therefore first be approved as to gifts, grace, and usefulness, that so the commission written with

¹⁰*The Bishop*: "Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the canons of this Church, to the ministry of the same?"

Answer: "I think so." ("Ordinal of the Church of England.")

¹¹1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

ink may be the outward sign of the commission written with the finger of God upon the heart.

The Church is also to determine the preacher's field of labor. In some instances, he may believe it to be assigned him by direct Divine intimation. He may claim to understand through an experience of his own such words as were written concerning apostles of old: "And when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not."¹² But the ordinary way of Divine guidance to one's place of work is through reason, conscience, and love, and the economy of the Church. The Christian who would despise or underrate these means of learning what the will of the Lord is, will expose himself to all the hurtful fancies of fanaticism.

The ministry of a Church may be organized with special reference to proclamation, or evangelical aggression. Here again a noteworthy instance is that of Methodism. Two features of Methodist economy showed at the beginning a peculiar adaptedness to the service of proclamation—namely, the appointing power and the itinerancy. And now that the Wesleyan Society has become a world-wide Church, these two features of its economy remain essentially unimpaired. That the evangelist should surrender his own will, as to where his labors shall be bestowed, to a revered and com-

¹²Acts xvi. 7.

petent authority, and having in the space of some months delivered and reiterated his message and gathered his converts, give place to a brother evangelist with a different gift of utterance, would seem to be the very ideal of a ministry of proclamation.

It is not the Christian pastoral ideal. But this may no more be disregarded than that of evangelism; for while it is much to proclaim the Kingdom, it is even more to build it up, little by little, day by day. In view of this object, a longer term of pastoral service in Methodist congregations is demanded—and has been provided for.

III

What the apostles had learned of Jesus, and were having interpreted to them in personal experience by the revealing Spirit, they must impart to all those who might become believers on him through their word. It was a distinct part of their commission: "Make disciples [learners, pupils] of all the nations. . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."¹³ Accordingly the work of the apostles and their fellow-ministers is described in the Acts and the Epistles as a work of *teaching* no less than of proclaiming the gospel.¹⁴ Paul, chief of the apostles

¹³Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

¹⁴Cf. Acts v. 42; xv. 35; Gal. vi. 6; Col. i. 28; 2 Tim. ii. 2.

as a missionary herald, ever pressing on to name the name of Christ where it had not been heard, was also chief teacher of the "mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."¹⁵ So also among the gifts that found expression in functions or offices in the apostolic churches, that of teaching is clearly recognized. "God hath set some in the Church, . . . teachers. . . . Are all teachers?"¹⁶ "And gave some to be . . . pastors and teachers."¹⁷ "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers."¹⁸ The presbyter-bishop must be "apt to teach."¹⁹

The purpose of Christianity is to Christianize, which means to evangelize and much more. It means that the light of the revelation in the Scriptures is to be brought to bear upon each man's daily conduct—at home, in business, in amusements, in politics, everywhere—and upon the innermost thoughts and motives of the heart. More and more the breadth of that commandment which is exceeding broad is to be learned; more and more the infinite treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ are to be sought out. Hence the teaching together with the proclaiming function of the pulpit.

¹⁵Col. ii. 2, 3.

¹⁶1 Cor. xii. 28, 29.

¹⁷Eph. iv. 11.

¹⁸Acts xiii. 1.

¹⁹1 Tim. iii. 2. Cf. Acts xviii. 1-11; xix. 1-10; xxviii. 30, 31.

Theoretically distinct, the two functions are not sharply separated in practice. Both are likely to be found, intermingled, in the same sermon. The humblest salvationist, who tells the true story of forgiveness in Christ, is a Christian teacher, while the most scholarly pastor who truly knows his calling, will be heard, after even a half century of ministering in a single congregation, both preaching and teaching Jesus Christ. Evangelic preaching (κῆρυγμα) is teaching begun, and evangelic teaching (διδασκαλία) is preaching completed.²⁰

Indeed, not only in preaching but even in congregational worship there is a pervasive didactic element. "*Teaching* and admonishing on another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."²¹ And as to congregational prayer—is not such filial converse of an illuminated soul with God the Father, in Jesus' name, instructive as well as inspiring to like-minded listeners? How much truth may be learned from the prayers of the Bible!

²⁰It is suggestive to note that in the Didache apostles are called prophets, and prophets are said to teach. (XI., 5, 6, 10.) Suggestive but not surprising; for in the New Testament it is written that out of the number of "prophets and teachers" in Antioch, two, Paul and Barnabas, were selected to go upon a missionary journey as "apostles," and that the evangelist Timothy is bidden not only to exhort but to "teach." (2 Tim. iv. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 2.)

²¹Col. iii. 16.

Inexhaustible is the teaching of the Prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to offer.

But in the economy of the Church, both under the Old and the New Covenant, may be seen a more specific provision than either the devotional meeting or the pulpit for the teaching office. In Israel not only were parental instruction and the public reading of the Law enjoined, but in post-exilic times, the synagogue, whose main purpose was the indoctrination of the people in the truths of religion, made its appearance. It was called "the house of instruction," as the temple was called "the house of prayer." The Law and later the Prophets were expounded by those whom the president might recognize at any meeting; and the true didactic method of question and answer might be followed.²² On both the forenoon and the afternoon of the Sabbath, and on the second and fifth days of the week, the congregation was invited to meet for this service.

Besides, there were schools for both children

²²"The main object of these Sabbath-day assemblies in the synagogue was not worship in the stricter sense—*i. e.*, not devotion, but religious instruction, and this for an Israelite was, above all, instruction in the Law. . . . In the time of Christ the 'teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath day' was already an established and naturalized institution." (Schürer, "The Jewish People in the Time of Christ," Div. II., Vol. II., pp. 53-55.)

and adults. These were in full operation in the time of our Lord.²³ The schools for children and youth, from five years old upward, were usually taught by the "attendant"²⁴ of the synagogue, and were sometimes held in the synagogue itself and sometimes elsewhere. The schools for adults were taught (often grievously mistaught) by the scribes, or rabbis. And nothing could exceed the reverence in which the teaching office was held in this period of Judaism.

In the Christian Church of the early centuries the teaching was represented by two notable institutions—namely, the catechumenate and the catechetical schools. The instruction given the catechumens extended through a period of two years or longer. The teachers were either officers—perhaps a bishop—or laymen or women (deaconesses), and were expected to be blameless in life and skillful in imparting knowledge.²⁵ The course, at least in some instances, embraced all the ordinary topics of Christian theology.

²³Cf. Schürer, *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 50; Stapfer, "Palestine in the Time of Christ," Bk. II., c. III., p. 302.

²⁴Luke iv. 20.

²⁵"Let the catechist instruct, being first instructed; for it is a work relating to the souls of men. For the teacher of the Word must accommodate himself to the various judgments of the learners. The catechist must therefore be learned, and unblameable, of much experience, and approved." (Clementines, "Epistle of Clement to James," 13.)

More advanced instruction, with discussions of the doctrines of Christianity as opposed to paganism, was given in the catechetical, or theological, schools, such as were organized in Alexandria, Cesarea, Carthage, and probably in some other places. Into these schools—taking that of Alexandria, the most celebrated, as an example—any seeker of truth was admitted as a student, no charge being made for tuition. The method of instruction was that of continuous discourse, combined with that of question and answer. Deep and far-reaching was the influence of these first great theological seminaries upon the Christian thought and life of the age.²⁶

With Protestantism came a revival of catechetics. In the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Anglican, and the English Presbyterian communions, catechisms were authoritatively adopted and enjoined as a means of instruction for the young. In the churches generally, to give such instruction, either personally or through appointed helpers, has been made a part of the pastor's official duty.

Indeed, if the first years of life are its plastic and determinative years, the church must be grievously defective in conscience and intelligence that does not somehow provide for the preoccupation of the mind of the child with Christian

²⁶Smith and Cheatham's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," Art. Schools.

truth. There is no other equally fruitful work: there is none whose neglect is more conducive to spiritual waste and disaster.

But the teaching institute that has been more widely extended than any other in the modern Church is the Sunday school. Originating with paid teachers, it rapidly enlarged its scope, and is now beginning to become in the fullest sense the Bible school of the Church. Its most promising field will ever be, in the very nature of things, the children and youth; but the eldest as well as the youngest of the whole community are embraced within its aim. There is even a "cradle roll" and a "home department."

The idea of the Sunday school as now conceived is that of the Church itself, with the open Bible in its hands, assembled to learn and to teach the will of God revealed in Jesus Christ: its leader the pastor, its officers and teachers laymen and women. The method of instruction—that of question and answer—was the Master's own method in his ministry of teaching, and indeed has been used by the teacher in all ages and with all classes of learners. Nor is there any more fitting method of personal evangelistic work.

But the catechetical class and the Sunday school must needs observe certain close limitations. They cannot go beyond the giving of strictly religious instruction, and this for the most part of an ele-

mentary character. Besides, the regular opportunity of the teacher with the pupil—one or two hours, or only a single half hour a week—is small indeed. The educational work of the Church, in the more technical sense of the word, has been organized in the form of church schools. These may be parochial schools (as, for instance, among the evangelical churches, in many Lutheran congregations of both Europe and America) for the younger children; but in the more familiar instances of our own country they are secondary schools, colleges, theological seminaries, and universities.

Significant is the fact that on an ancient seal of the first college founded in America was the motto, "*Pro Christo et ecclesie*"; that for the first two centuries of America's educational history almost all her colleges were distinctly Christian and denominational institutions; that such a society as the Friends, who began with so slight an appreciation of human learning, has produced not a few of the best schools and teachers in the land; and that the church that has been most distinguished in American Christianity for organized evangelism among the poor and the uneducated, numbers more educational institutions under its patronage and control than does any of its sister churches.

What, then, is the idea of the church school? Properly understood, it is the highest and most

comprehensive of all educational conceptions. Man is essentially spiritual. The ideal of spirituality has become actual in Jesus the Son of God. Education is the development not of this or that power—as, for example, the muscles or the reasoning faculty—but of the whole man in the unity of his nature. It is calling forth the latent powers of body, intellect, spirit, and of the spirit recognized as supreme. In its perfection, therefore, it is no other than a Christian process. “Unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

There is also a teaching agency to the use of which the Church has been committed from the beginning by one of the forms in which the truth of which she has been made the custodian was chiefly embodied. That revealed truth was *written down*. Not wholly trusted to the living voice, to memorial institutions, to symbolic rites, it was recorded in books. To the last of the great prophets of the New Covenant, as to the first of the Old, was given the command, The things which thou hast seen and heard write.”²⁷ “These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.”²⁸ From the days of Sinai the Church has taught through letters, even through the Scriptures which by the inspiration

²⁷Ex. xxxiv. 27; Rev. i. 11. ²⁸John xx. 31.

of the Holy Spirit came from her hands. Imagine them unwritten.

Beyond all estimate and all imagining is the power of the press. Easily multiplying the writer's manuscripts into hundreds of thousands, it gathers about him an innumerable company of readers the world over. Every enlightened land is thick sown with literature. The Christian Church, therefore, could not have done otherwise than organize the leaflet, the pamphlet, the periodical, the tract, the book, as teaching forces in her service. Increasingly prominent among her institutions is the publishing house.

Undoubtedly the spoken word, freighted with the wealth of voice and living presence, enters the soul with an intimate power that is all its own. It cannot be substituted. Though the printing press should make every man on earth a reader, the Master's command, "Go, preach," would not be thereby rendered obsolete. But the printed word can go where the speaker is unable to make his way; and it may abide in power, reproducing itself even in form unto the end of time. Where the living voice of the pulpit or the school cannot be heard, the Church speaks, as a teacher, through her literature, perpetually.

IV

Having diligently evangelized and wisely taught, the Church has by no means completed her direct

service to the soul. There is another ecclesiastical function, less easily defined, but none the less real. Let us call it *spiritual nurture*.

Jesus preached and taught; yet how far are these two words from expressing his whole ministration to the inner life of those who were about him. What he did for them does not measure what he was to them. He was his own greatest gift. His presence among men quickened, cherished, strengthened, nurtured the life of God in their souls. He was the good Shepherd, who knew his flock and was known of them; the Master, who chose followers not simply that they might come after him but "that they might be with him"; the Friend, who, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them unto the end; the Bread of life, that men might live by him. What was it that brought Zaccheus and the "woman that was a sinner" and others to his feet, and lifted them up in the new joy of an immortal hope? What was it that won the reverence and devotion of his disciples, and wrought as a transforming life-force in their spiritual nature? It was HIMSELF. Himself the Way, himself the Truth, himself the Life.

As Christ was, so is his Church to be in this world, a quickener and cherisher of souls. It was said of Henry Clay Trumbull: "It was both our humiliation and our glory that he was ever finding in us nobleness which we did not know was possible for us, until he loved it into being." To

love the possible good in men into actual existence, and then into growth and greatness, such a function of the individual Christian is with multiplied power a function of the congregation of Jesus Christ. It is being Christlike to men.

Atmosphere is not all, but it is very much, to the growing plant. It may either chill and shrivel and poison, or it may nourish into strength and fruitfulness. Every man has his own moral atmosphere, by himself created, which no one can enter into his presence without becoming sensible of. So has every home. So has every Christian congregation, which is a home for the soul.

What is this church atmosphere? Wisdom, fair dealing, manliness, womanliness, thoughtfulness, brotherliness, patience and peace, faith, joy, love—in a word, the spirit of Jesus. Where such a spirit prevails it will indeed be shown that “those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” Toward such a congregation all that are touched by its influence will be insensibly drawn; and in it the untried soul will feel the protective power of intermingled moral earnestness and human sympathy, and will catch the contagion of zeal for the service of the Lord. “Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. . . . Wherefore *receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you.*”²⁹

²⁹Rom. xv. 1, 7.

The word (*προσλαμβάνεσθαι*) represents the hand-grasp of hospitality and brotherhood. It means *take into your heart and home*.

It is incumbent on the Church to mother her children. Alas, for the mother who gets no nearer the heart of the child than she is able to come through words of knowledge or wisdom or command on her lips! It is in the brooding care, the sheltering presence, the warmth of self-giving affection, that the child, under the divine law of motherhood, is to begin the development of its own affectional and higher life. Said the man who, with his ministerial collaborators, represented, as did none of his contemporaries, the universal Church: "But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us."³⁰ Christian nurture is the giving of a life to the other lives that need it most.

Are there any who need it more than the *young people*? There are none who respond so generally to its influence. There are none whose claim is so touching and insistent. Blessed is that church which offers to its most impressionable and promiscuous children a home in which their social nature will receive a genial appreciation and cul-

³⁰1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

ture, while their faults are shamed away by the presence of a noble Christian manhood and womanhood, and the beginnings of spiritual character are nourished by an encompassing personal life of Christly human love. Are they to be trained as a class of disciples, a league of workers, an army of obedient soldiers, in the Master's service? Nowhere can it be so well done as in a genuine church home.

III

FUNCTION: BENEFICENCE

HAS the Church any office to perform outside the distinctly spiritual life? In making answer to such a question, let it be remembered that the human nature of which we are all so keenly conscious is not a simple unitary thing. It is made up of strange and powerful opposites—body and soul, heart and intellect, selfhood and sociality. It is these in synthesis that make the man. And just how broad a relation the Church is designed to sustain toward this marvelous embodiment of dust and spirit is what we should like to know. Does physical, intellectual, or social betterment properly fall within the sphere of the Congregation of Jesus Christ? Including these forms of service under the name of *beneficence*, let us see if here also is to be found an ecclesiastical function.

That the Church is indirectly such a health-giver, no one will deny. The "saving health" which she ministers to the spirit will extend, in its beneficent effects, to the whole man. It will pervade all his physical and social relations. To make a man a son of God is to give him dominion over the earth. It is to make him, wherever outward circumstances permit, sound in body, happy in his

family, a producer of wealth, a helpful neighbor, an upright citizen. One cannot imagine a community where the Church had met with complete success as an evangelist, a teacher, and a spiritual mother, though she had done absolutely nothing else, that was other than a prosperous community in its whole physical and social life. The lower good may be enjoyed (though not in its finest quality) without that which is highest: nevertheless it is the absence of the highest that best explains the absence of the lower. Does the natural in this world constitute the basis of the spiritual? The spiritual, in its turn, is lord of the natural, to command its ideal use and perfection.

But the question is, whether there has been committed to the Church by its Founder a direct ministry to men's bodily, intellectual, and social nature; and if so, what are the aims of this ministry?

I

It is unquestionable that in the Church State of Israel care was taken of both the people's spiritual and bodily life. There were regulations for cleanliness and for protection against physical injury.¹ A prescribed portion of the harvest and the vintage—the gleanings, the produce of the corners of the fields, the fallen grapes—must be left for gathering by the poor.² And with them

¹Deut. xxiii. 12-14; xxii. 8. ²Lev. xix. 9, 10.

must share the stranger in the land: "The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."³ The servant's wages must be promptly paid when the day's work was done.⁴ The social element in religion was made prominent: the multitude went to the house of God and kept holy day together; the great religious occasions were festivals. On the seventh day all labor must be intermitted: "That thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou."⁵ In the seventh year all debts were remitted.⁶ In the fiftieth year all land that had passed out of the hands of its original owners reverted to him or to his family—so that land titles were inalienable.⁷ There was no aristocracy: the government was a theocratic democracy. All were of one blood and lineage, all alike children of Abraham, and on that account of the same social standing. They must lend money to a brother in need, and charge no interest.⁸ In a word, the Church State's ministration was to soul and body, to man as man. And the basis of this whole economy was the nation's common relation to Him who had called them to be his people: "I am Jehovah thy God."⁹

³Lev. xix. 34. ⁴Lev. xix. 34. ⁵Deut. v. 14.

⁶Deut. xv. 1-3. ⁷Lev. xxv. 13-34.

⁸Deut. xv. 7, 8; xxiii. 19.

⁹Is it not a significant fact that the very beginning

The early conditions of life in the Land of Promise were extremely simple. To each man had been allotted his little farm of a few acres. The city had not yet been developed. There were some poor people but no "problem" of poverty—no industrial conditions adapted to create such a problem. The extremes of glittering wealth and abject indigence were nowhere conspicuous. But in the eighth century before Christ, under the reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II. in the Northern Kingdom, both countries enjoyed a long period of prosperity, which, as in so many subsequent cases, found its way largely into the lives of the few. There was now a city life, with the rich in their houses of ivory, and the poor man on his ash heap. Avarice and self-indulgence wrought their characteristic cruelty toward the weak and dispossessed classes.

False prophets in Israel kept silence about it all—as in not a few Christian pulpits of to-day.

of the Church State of Israel was in a divine deliverance from an industrial oppression?—"The Hebrew Church, in so far as it came to have a definite place of worship and a system of ordinances, began with the deliverance of the children of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. . . . 'I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them.'" (Brown, "The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit," pp. 5, 6.)

Their living was involved: they prophesied for hire, and must not offend their masters. But it was also an age of the true and great prophets of Jehovah; and these were friends to the poor. Without fear, faithful to the commission he had received in the secret place of the Most High, the prophet declared the just judgments of God against the industrial oppressor. Isaiah pronounced a woe upon the grasping landlords who joined house to house and field to field till there was no room for anybody else, and they should be made to "dwell alone in the midst of the land."¹⁰ Micah described those who, "because it is in the power of their hand," "covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them away," as plucking the very flesh from the bones of Jehovah's people, and eating their flesh.¹¹ Cannibals of civilization, they fattened off the lives of their brethren—as it is done now, by very many, in our modern and Western land of promise. But they should meet with utter overthrow at the hands of Jehovah's scourge, the threatening and merciless Assyrians. And as to the false prophets, who laid aside the sword of the Spirit, and cried, Peace—"Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine."¹²

Rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed, were

¹⁰Isa. v. 8.

¹¹Micah ii. 1, 2; iii. 2, 3.

¹²Micah iii. 6.

all alike members of the Church in that day; but of that inner church of which Jehovah's prophets were representatives and ministers, no one could ever have ventured to say, It flatters the rich and cares nothing for the cause of the poor.

II

How was it to be, according to the voice of the prophets, under the rule of Messiah, when he should come? Even ideal prosperity, physical and social, would then be realized. The very desert would send forth streams of living water and blossom into beauty. Jerusalem would be called the City of Truth, and death should hardly be known in it; for the very old should be there, men and women, and the streets of the city should "be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."¹³ But how did it prove to be at the beginning of the actual rule and administration of Messiah, when he appeared as the Man of Sorrows and sovereign of a kingdom that comes not with observation? Almost wholly different from what had been expected.

True, a new era was inaugurated; but it was an era of the spirit, not of outward peace and wealth, nor of national glory. The horizons of the soul were lifted and the eternal opened to view. So the words of the King were spoken continually of the things of the spirit; the flesh was nothing,

¹³Zech. viii. 5.

the spirit all. He himself who came down from heaven was the bread that he should give: "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you."¹⁴

Therefore, says the ascetic, let us rise above the Old Testament idea of a rich natural life as the gift of God, and distress the body for the salvation of the soul. But this would be a wholly unwarranted inference from Messiah's teaching. It was his aim to reveal to men their life in its reality and in its wholeness, and hence to show the relative worth of the material and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly. Compared with the spiritual, to be sure, the flesh is nothing, just as compared with the dateless years of eternity four-score years of time sink into utter insignificance. Nevertheless a single nerve fiber of the body, or a single moment of time, is a real thing; and not only real, though so small in itself, but also vitally related to a life whose value is ultimate and infinite. So the Lord and Saviour of the spirit was also Lord and Saviour of the body. "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, . . . *healing* all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people."¹⁵ He added joy to the wedding feast, and turned the grief of the bereaved household into gladness.¹⁶ He would have all that

¹⁴John vi. 27. ¹⁵Matt. iv. 23.

¹⁶John ii. 1-11; Luke vii. 11-16; John xi. 1-44.

learned of him to help bear the burden of the poor and disadvantaged: "When thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind."¹⁷ When the imprisoned forerunner would know, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Jesus enumerated as signs of the Messiahship, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached unto them."¹⁸

Why this wonderful Messianic ministry to men's bodies? Because it communicated a life which was good in itself; but much more because it won an entrance for that gospel of salvation which is life indeed.

The same things may be affirmed of the social life and teachings of Jesus. He honored the family, the State, the circle of friendship. When he would bring salvation to the household of Zaccheus, he entered his home as a guest, and took a meal with him, self-invited, because he knew that Zaccheus would think it presumptuous to invite him: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house."¹⁹ He walked and talked with men, was accessible to them at all times, lived among them; and he bade them, under sanctions the most fearful and the most glorious, to be kind to the poor, to take heed that they despised not little children, and in the fullest

¹⁷Luke xiv. 13.¹⁸Luke vii. 22.¹⁹Luke xix. 5.

sense of the words to live as neighbors one to another. The manner of his teaching itself was notably social, face to face, question and answer, talk at the table, a group of all sorts of people freely gathered together and the Master in the midst.

III

When, therefore, Christian congregations began to be gathered in the apostolic age, it is not surprising to find them taking, in part, the form of social and beneficent institutions. The early charism of "healing" symbolized a permanent congregational power of service to bodily needs. It was not unfitting, then, that among the first notes of organized Christianity should be the gathering of a fund, through voluntary contributions, for the common benefit—"all things common";²⁰ that the first elected officers in the Church were ministers of "tables";²¹ that prominent among the qualifications of the pastor must be hospitality;²² that James, the brother of the Lord, should write down with a pen of fire the miseries that shall come upon the rich man who keeps back by fraud the hire of the laborers that have reaped his fields, and should teach that the only religious worship (*θρησκεία*) which can avail anything is that which will prompt its possessor to minister to "the fatherless and

²⁰Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 32. ²¹Acts vi. 1-6.

²²1 Tim. iii. 2.

widows in their affliction.”²³ The touch of the Church, like that of the Master, must be health-giving to soul and body.

One by one the apostles, who had seen the Lord and gone forth to deliver his message “as having nothing, yet possessing all things,” finished their labors and fell asleep. Ere long the churches underwent divers changes in rites and polity. But in one respect at least their apostolic character was long maintained and developed—they practiced the ministration of beneficence.

It was an organized ministration. The offerings of the people were brought to the Lord’s table; and an important part of the bishop’s office was to take charge of them, and through the hands of deacons distribute them to the poor. “We,” says Justin Martyr, “who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock, and communicate to every one in need.”²⁴ The office of deaconess was established, specifically for beneficent ministration to women. The orphan was cared for in the private house, the bishop’s house, or the asylum, and taught some suitable trade, that he might no longer burden the brethren’s “sincere love for him, but might support himself.”²⁵ Not only were asylums founded for orphans, but also for widows, the sick, and the poor;

²³James i. 27; v. 4. ²⁴“I. Apology,” xiv.

²⁵“Apostolic Constitutions,” IV. 1, 2.

and in one instance at least buildings were provided in which hapless strangers might learn "such occupations as are necessary to life, and have been found essential to a respectable career."²⁶

There is an old story of Laurentius the deacon (d. 258) who, when it was demanded of him by the persecuting Roman prefect that he yield up the treasures of the church, which were reported to be very great, brought forward a company of the old, the afflicted, and the poor, with the answer, "These are our treasures." Authentic or apocryphal, the story is true. It pictures the Church of that age, in which the presence of the poor was regarded as a distinct enrichment of its life. No treasures are more real to the true-hearted mother than her dependent little children.

More than any other man the bishop, then as now, stood for the Church—its representative, its leader. What, then, were some of the beneficent offices required of him? If we may accept the witness of the Apostolic Constitutions, they were such as these: "Exhibiting to the orphan the care of parents; to the widow, the care of a husband; to those of suitable age, marriage; to the artificer, work; to the unable, commiseration; to the stranger, a house; to the hungry, food; to the sick, visitation; to the prisoner, assistance."²⁷

²⁶Basil, "Epistle," 94.

²⁷"Apostolic Constitutions," IV. 2.

It was from such Christly ministries as these, in the early Church, that there went forth the new spirit of good will which wrought so widely for the regeneration of society in that hard Roman world.

Now if these primitive Christians had been asked why this material beneficence should not be left to the State, or at least to Christians and other philanthropists in their private capacity, while the Church, as such, confined its attention to worship, discipline, and the spoken word, they would probably have found it difficult to understand the question. It had never entered their minds. They had not so learned Christ. They looked upon the Church as a spiritual home in which all sympathy, helpfulness, and brotherhood were to find organic expression, and the body accordingly was not to be despised. Until the leaven of asceticism, stealing in partly from pagan sources, corrupted the simplicity of the gospel, to be unearthly was not glorified into a condition of becoming heavenly.

IV

Under a Christian civilization many beneficent institutions, such as industrial schools, asylums, and poor-relief associations, are supported by State and municipal legislation, while many others are founded and maintained by private benevolence. The State can do still more for the prevention and relief of poverty, and the promotion

of general material prosperity, by enlightened laws for the suppression of vice and the protection of the weak against the injustice of the strong. In all this, every wellwisher of his race may find cause of rejoicing and hope, and every Christian see some sign of the coming of God's kingdom upon earth. In it all, the Church, too, so far as she has proved true to her Founder, is largely influential, as a teacher and inspirer of the spirit of humanity.

But in addition to exerting this indirect influence, the Church must still, as ever of old, in her organized capacity, claim the sphere of beneficence as directly and peculiarly her own. It is one of the chief blessings and responsibilities given her of God. Shall she forget that in a very true sense here are her "treasures"?

Besides, in the present day industrial and social conditions are making a special demand upon the heart and conscience of the Christian people. Political freedom, the means of living, and general intelligence have greatly increased in the last hundred years. But the same hundred years has been the age of machinery, and through this cause industrial independence has been declining. Equality of rights is won, but equality of opportunity to do one's best for oneself is yet but a distant dream.

The contrasts of wealth and poverty have grown more numerous, more sharply defined, more irritating. In the heart of the cities are vast con-

gested populations of the helpless poor, out of touch with the more prosperous classes, an easy prey to all manner of vice, estranged from the churches. For the most part they are without knowledge, without opportunity, and (deepest poverty, alas! of all) without aspiration. In hearing of church bells and good Christian sermons, they care little or nothing for such things. If not directly antagonistic, they are prejudiced and uninterested. Under the old familiar methods of the various Protestant churches, the gospel has failed to gain or to retain its hold upon them.²⁸

Revivalism is good, but not sufficient: it cannot be. Evangelistic and devotional meetings are indispensable; but there are physical and social needs to which these meetings make no appeal, that must also be recognized in the name of Christ at their true value and in their right relations. We may find an instructive illustration in the

²⁸“It must be remembered that the non-churchgoer, as a rule, regards as a bore the very thing which the Christian esteems as a privilege, and that in order to make him change his opinion he must be brought around to a different standpoint, where he can be made to see that the Church is interested in the things which interest him. It is all very well to open our church doors on the Lord’s day and say to the people, ‘Come in.’ The sad truth is, however, that they will not come on any such invitation.” (C. A. Dickinson, in “Christianity Practically Applied,” pp. 359, 360.)

Young Men's Christian Association, which, beginning with the prayer meeting, has enlarged its scope to include the reading room and the gymnasium; and in the Salvation Army, which has added to its street preaching the lodging house, the shelter, the rescue home, the farm colony.

Now it is in response, not wholly but especially, to these demands of our own time that the Institutional Church, or, as it may preferably be called, the Open Church, has developed.²⁹ It is not sectarian nor even denominational.³⁰ It is not essentially new. It may claim close kinship with such work as that of the primitive bishop, who must offer "to the artificer, work"; or that of Cyprian of Carthage, who, as curator of the Church funds, even while in exile, saw that provision was made to pay off the debts of Church members and "to help those poor mechanics with a convenient sum who were willing to set up their trades"; or that of Wesley in London, with his dispensary, and home for the poor, and loan fund, and Christian school, and Christian home, in connection with the Old Foundry Church; or that

²⁹Mead, "Modern Methods in Church Work," p. 18.

³⁰"On the contrary, it makes for Christian unity. "The development of institutionalism is undoubtedly far and away the most marked feature of religious life in this country [England] at the present time. It tends to knock down denominational barriers and also to reduce to a minimum theological distinctions." (Albert Dawson, in *The Congregationalist*.)

of Chalmers in Glasgow, organizing a system of service for the poor of his vast parish that would relieve their wants and enlarge their opportunities without encouraging improvidence and pauperism; or with that of our present-day foreign missionaries.

V

The Open Church may be defined as "an organized body of Christian believers, who, finding themselves in a hard and uncongenial social environment, supplement the ordinary methods of the gospel—such as preaching, prayer meeting, Sunday school, and pastoral visitation—by a system of organized kindness, a congeries of institutions, which, by touching people on physical, social, and intellectual sides, will conciliate them and draw them within reach of the gospel."³¹ It is not its plan, then, to lay aside any of the old methods, but to have more preaching, Sunday-school work, congregational worship, and pastoral visiting, rather than less.³² It proposes to keep the church

³¹Judson, "The Institutional Church," p. 31.

³²The pastor of the Baptist Memorial Institutional Church of New York City has said: "My own rule is to preach twice on Sunday, attend my Sunday school, conduct my weekly prayer meetings, and make from thirty to fifty calls a week. An assistant cannot do this in lieu of a pastor. People want to see the same man in the pulpit that they saw by the washtub or the sick bed. Otherwise the charm is

doors open during the week as well as on Sundays. But it would also add other rooms and other houses to the house of the Lord. It would make tributary to its ministry of preaching and teaching a larger and more systematic ministry to the mind and the body. Accordingly it asks for much money from its supporters, and for that which is even harder to command—for much time, planning, sympathy, labor, self-giving. In truth it is extremely expensive, as practical Christianity always has been and always will be. It rests under no illusion of serving the Lord with that which costs nothing. Its appeal is to the unselfish and heroic.³³

broken. If institutionalism means to replace the old régime of preaching and pastoral work, it had better take itself off." (Judson, "The Institutional Church," p. 35.)

³³"Regarding the running expenses, the Church membership raises but a small part, the rest being provided for by the Woman's Board of City Missions, who have a large number of persons and several church societies giving systematically to the work. In addition, there is also the Institutional Church Club, which provides for several thousand dollars annually, each membership in this club being twenty-five dollars, and one person taking one or more memberships. The membership is not confined to the Methodist Church, but includes persons of all sects and creeds, every one desirous of uplifting his brother or sister in need." (C. W. Moore, pastor of Institutional Church in Kansas City.)

Finding many destitute persons in the community, it would provide them with the necessities of life—hence the lunch room and the lodging house; finding many sick, it would comfort and heal them—hence the dispensary and the hospital; finding many untrained and unemployed, it would put them in the way of earning a livelihood—hence the sewing school and the employment bureau; finding many shiftless, it would encourage frugality—hence the penny savings bank; finding many untutored little children and broken-spirited mothers, it would gather them together for entertaining instruction and good cheer—hence the kindergarten and the mothers' meeting; finding young men and others without homes or helpful associations, exposed to the unceasing and terrible temptations of city life, it offers them the gymnasium, the reading room, and the young men's club.

It is true that very many Christian congregations employ one or more such agencies, without thereby distinguishing themselves from others, or being designated by any new name. The difference between these and churches known as "institutional," or "open," or "free" (none of the names is altogether satisfactory, and no specific name whatever seems to be necessary), is in the quantity rather than the quality of their subsidiary work. The motives and the general methods are the same in all.

Now to say that the leaders of the Open Church

have made mistakes, and will have to learn from experience, is simply to say that they are not perfect or infallible. To assert that an organization of this kind is liable to abuse, and may become the occasion of evils, is only to assert that it exists on earth and not above the stars.

VI

Nevertheless it is pertinent to inquire, concerning any institution, what are its weaknesses or danger points, and how any threatening evil may be averted. As to the Open Church, therefore, certain questions will invite consideration, and may suggest answers.

1. Is there no danger from over-organization? From the fact, for illustration, that in the human body two arms are better than one, it by no means follows that four would be better than two. So likewise in a church, as in any social institution, an undue multiplication of organs tends toward the overtaxing of the vital energies, the interference of separate activities, and dissipation rather than concentration of force. Enough is enough.

But on the other hand, there are churches that are under-organized. They number hundreds of members who have no specific work offered them to do—none at least which they are willing to accept. New forms of service, suitable to their gifts and inclination, might help to solve this painful problem of the unemployed.

Besides, increase in the vitality of a church, which must multiply its labors and enlarge its liberality, is usually found to be a more needful object of endeavor than restriction of its beneficent undertakings.

2. May not the benefactions of the Open Church pauperize the spirit of its beneficiaries, and thus increase even outward poverty in the very effort to relieve it?

It must be believed that such effects were sometimes produced by the Christians of the early Church, in its "first love," and by the monks at the gates of the monasteries of the Middle Ages, through indiscriminate charity; for in not a few instances they seem to have acted habitually on the principle that it were better to gratify ninety-nine unworthy applicants than to deny, in the person of the hundredth, one who was worthy. They were blindly damaging the ninety-nine, with many others through them, rather than taking reasonable pains to discover the hundredth, and minister to each according to his need if not his request. The same effects are no doubt produced by much of the giving at the front doors and the kitchen doors of modern American homes. Let it be seen that a good living may be made by begging, and the community of beggars will steadily increase—the community of workers proportionately diminishing. Ancient and true is the proverb, He that gives to all denies all.

No material gifts can compensate for the loss of self-respect, self-dependence, *selfhood*. Deeply unkind are the most well-meant kindnesses of its destroyers. But with these one cannot fairly number the Open Church. Its methods are adapted not to degrade but to offer brotherly encouragement and opportunity. Its giving is not a mere momentary gratification of kindly feeling, nor a hand impulsively stretched forth in the dark, nor an easy way to get rid of a troublesome mendicant, nor a fancied meritorious act with which to atone for the sins of the doer. It would seem to be instructed as well as organized kindness. "To the artificer, work; to the unable, commiseration."³⁴

Again, it is far from being a fact that the Open

³⁴"The institutional church, if plentifully supplied with money, is in danger of pauperizing the community in which it is located, while it repels the self-respecting workingman. Families three miles away have been advised by neighboring charity workers to move into the community of Ruggles Street Baptist Church for the purpose of receiving help; and when they come with that motive, it is almost impossible to really benefit them." (A. C. Dixon.) Here, doubtless, is a pertinent cautionary example. It suggests more carefulness, but not less earnestness, in applying the great Church principle which is given by the writer in this same connection: "The body is redeemed, and Christians should do all they can to relieve physical wants, but the great work of the Church is the redemption of the soul, and everything else should be made secondary to that."

Church is for the very poor only. It is also for well-to-do classes.

3. But is not the Church, as the kingdom of heaven exemplified, to be distinctively inspirational and educative? Has it not been given to the world as a home of the soul, in which under the voice of prophet-preachers, the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and the power of Christian fellowship, men are to be qualified for labor and service in all spheres of human welfare? Should not the general work of social betterment be chiefly done, therefore, by individual Christians, and through municipal and State action, rather than by the Church in its organized capacity? Is not the principle of the differentiation of function to be here respected? And must not the large amount and variety of work undertaken by some institutional churches, in addition to the work of preaching, instruction, and pastoral care, be regarded as an exceptional and not a typical instance?

To such a line of queries, an affirmative answer, I must believe, may be returned. But "when some of the bodily members are out of order, other members are compelled to do the work of the disabled members in addition to their own," and similarly "in abnormal social conditions the Church is called upon to do the work of several social instrumentalities in addition to her own."³⁵ If the fundamental principles be sound, the application

³⁵Hyde, "Outlines of Social Theology," p. 246.

of them may be left to Christian wisdom and love, under the varying conditions of the time.

4. Assuming that reading rooms, sewing schools, gymnasiums, employment bureaus, and other "institutional" arrangements, are good in themselves, will not a Church lose in distinctly spiritual power by devoting so large an amount of attention to these things?

If it should prove to be so, the cause of the new (or new-old) movement is unquestionably lost. For the business of any Christian church, first, last, and always, is to turn the eyes of needy and sinful men to the Cross. Every pastor must be able to say, with the chief pastor of the Church at Corinth, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Whatever would rob the Christian congregation of spiritual and evangelic power is thereby worthy only of avoidance. Moreover, it is easily conceivable that a church in which the evangelical spirit is feeble, and the spirit of human helpfulness and kindness relatively strong, may make the impression of a humanitarian rather than a spiritual force.

But that the tendency of large and self-sacrificing labors in Christ's name, for the temporal happiness of men, is to diminish a church's spirituality or its success in saving souls, has not yet been proved. The evidence points strongly in the opposite direction. Spiritual success, as attested

by professions of conversion, purified lives, attendance upon preaching and devotional services, and activity in the Lord's work, seems to have been greatly increased by the enlarged ministration to the outward wants of the community.³⁶

5. May not making such a business of beneficent and religious activity steal the soul away from the quiet hour of Divine communion?

The question is pertinent to any large participation in outward religious affairs and activities, whether in the Open Church or in any other; and it deserves serious attention. It is in the secret of his presence that the soul is clothed with power to do the work of God. Let it be cumbered with much serving, to the neglect of sitting at Jesus' feet to learn immediately from him, and the serving may often be little better than busy idleness. It will lack the touch of spiritual power. It will not awaken in men as it might the consciousness of the Divine. The calmness of mind, the quickened sense of eternal realities, the openness to the Master's mind and teaching, which comes through daily meditation and prayer, alone with God—no business of beneficence can serve as a substitute for that.

³⁶Russell H. Conwell, *The Story of a Church*, in "Christianity Practically Applied"; McCulloch, "The Open Church," pp. 51-53; Mead, "Modern Methods in Church Work," Chap. XLIII.; Gladden, "The Christian Pastor," pp. 408, 411, 412; Strong, "Social Progress" (1904), p. 221.

At all times, in all circumstances, in the modern as in the ancient age, the Christian way is the same—the uplifted heart in the inner chamber, the diligent hand in the world of men. Was it not the way of Jesus, who said, “We must do the works of Him that sent me, while it is day,” on whose lips there ever dwelt the word in season for each several soul, through whose hands there thrilled the healing and uplifting power of God? “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.”

IV

THE CONSTITUTIONAL FORWARD MOVEMENT: AT HOME

IN all the institutes and activities of the Church, its creeds, rites, and polity, its proclaiming, teaching, nurturing, and beneficence, there is contained the idea of self-extension. It is not a statutory but a constitutional idea. That the Church should merely continue to live, holding its own, is an intolerable conception. It contradicts the law of life. Like any plant of the earth, this plant which the heavenly Father's hand has planted, must grow and increase, self-multiplying. Its life must be lived and its fruit borne not only in Judea, the home land, and in Samaria, the border land, but in unknown isles and continents even unto the uttermost part of the earth.¹

Nor is there any essential difference in the life work of the Church, as appointed by Christ, in different ages or in different lands. "Ancient" and "modern," "at home" and "abroad," are here but superficial terms. The Church's time is always and its place everywhere. Circumstances do greatly differ; but the inner spiritual need, the word of salvation, the power of the ever-present Spirit—these do not differ nor change nor pass away.

¹Acts i. 8.

They bear the marks of no congregational or geographical or racial distinctions.

Neither may the evangelist in Christendom convey his Master's message in any less perfect spirit of consecration than that which marks his brother evangelist in heathendom. There are vocations, indeed, to peculiar outward sufferings and heroic endeavor—to isolation, homelessness, deadly peril. And the responses to them are not few or hesitant. If Mazzini, the Italian patriot-leader, could say that the appeal to "come and suffer" was one he had never known to fail, it would be sad for the leaders in the Church of Christ if they had had no similar experience. The Church's appeal to self-sacrifice and heroism has not failed. Christ's witnesses, men and women alike, are still going to the farthest regions of the earth, his evangel on their lips and the steady glow of his love in their hearts. Cultured young Christians, loving neither home nor friends nor native land nor their own lives more than they love Jesus Christ, offer themselves freely for this difficult and far-away labor of love. Shall we not call them preëminently sons and daughters of the Cross? But the world over, the brotherhood of workers is one in the missionary motive, and the work is one.

I

At present each Christian congregation, wherever found, is but a light-bearer amid much dark-

ness. "The seven *candlesticks* are seven churches" still. All about them are the unevangelized. If there have been periods of time in which whole communities, or practically whole nations, were church members—as, for instance, in England when the entire population was supposed to be baptized into the Church, and nonattendance upon public worship was punishable with a fine, or in some European countries to-day—it is because the church life has been more nominal than real. The darkness is within its own pale; the unevangelized are there, with perhaps a little company of Christian witnesses, an inner Israel, among them.

In our country from two-thirds to three-fourths of the people are members of no Christian communion, Roman Catholic or Protestant, Evangelical or Liberal. About four-fifths are outside the Evangelical Churches. Whether the case be that of a congregation in the crowded city or in some thinly populated rural region, the same general conditions prevail: all about the church are those who make no personal confession of Christ. An exception to the rule is so rare as to become notable.

True everywhere, this fact is most patent and formidable in our chief cities. Because in these communities the human world as it is, in its strength and weakness, in its virtues and vices, in its overflowing life and its numberless gateways of

death, most completely appears. In the country is nature; in the city is man.

Besides, the universal tendency is toward an increasing growth of the urban as compared with the rural population. The migration is not from city to country, but from the wide spaces of the country to the already overcrowded city.

Why should it be so? One answer is that there are peculiar economic reasons for such a course of events in present-day civilization. The utilizing of natural forces for industrial purposes is transferring the world's work from country to city; and where the work is, there the workers will gather together. But there is a deeper reason, wholly independent of economic conditions. It is the same reason that accounts for the fact that the novel and the newspaper are more sought after, beyond all comparison, than any other form of literature. It is the resistless power of the gregarious instinct. It is the spell of that world-old magician—Society. Men would be with their fellows. The great surging tides of a life kindred with one's own yield an unceasing pleasurable excitement. The street is a fellowship, an entertainment, a constant mental tonic. The miserable slum-dweller who came back after an absence of some weeks from the comfortable home that had been secured for her in the country, to her apartment in the filthy tenement house, furnished the master key to the problem in a single homely and heartfelt word: "I like

people more than stumps." It is an abounding life of like nature with one's own that fascinates and compels.

The tables of the statistician are here quite worthy of attention. It has been shown that in England, Germany, France, even in Russia—substantially in the whole of Europe—the growth of the cities is far outstripping that of the country. In our own land the facts are no less noteworthy. In the year 1800 there were six cities (*i. e.*, towns of eight thousand or more inhabitants) in the United States; in 1890, four hundred and forty-eight. In 1800 about four per cent. of the population lived in cities; in 1890, between twenty-nine and thirty per cent.—the increase being from a twenty-fifth to nearly a third.²

Furthermore, the proportion of church-goers to the total population is much less in the great cities than in the country. According to fairly recent statistics, in New York it is one in thirteen; in Chicago, one in nineteen; in Cincinnati, one in twenty-three. And it is also to be noted that a much larger proportion of workingmen than of the other classes is outside the pale of the churches.³ To a church in a city of the first century it was written: "Among whom [namely, an ungodly and froward generation] ye are seen as lights in

²Wright, "Practical Sociology," pp. 115, 116.

³Loomis, "Modern Cities," p. 89.

the world, holding forth the word of life."⁴ What would be the difference in an apostolic description of a church in the twentieth century city?

II

Now it is such facts as these, concerning which volumes might be and already have been written, that are stirring the hearts of Christian teachers and leaders to organize special movements for the Christianization of the cities; and it seems fitting that the most conspicuous of these movements should have been started in the chief city of Christendom and of the world.

Let us, then, take the recent Christianizing enterprises of London as illustrative examples of the general home missionary enterprise of the Church.

This world-city contains, within a circumference of about one hundred and twenty miles, seven million inhabitants; and the number is increasing at the rate of over a hundred thousand annually. According to an estimate made a few years ago as to the seating capacity of all the houses of worship in the city, if some bright Sunday morning every seat should be occupied, there would still be two and a half million people unprovided for.

Vice, organized here as elsewhere by the love of money, is largely in possession of the field. Its organization is thorough, and the work of destruction to the bodies and souls of its myriad victims

⁴Phil. ii. 15, 16.

ceases not for one moment, day nor night. Through well-laid plans and industrious agents, these two powerful allies, vice and covetousness, are entrapping an ever-renewed multitude of young men and women, from the country and elsewhere, in the toils of intemperance and impurity. Whether the churches be open or closed, the house of death is always open, and the paths leading to it are made smooth and alluring. The depth and extent of these evil conditions are unimaginable. Little marvel, then, if those who kept looking upon such things with their own eyes, and with a heart of Christian compassion, should have been driven to devise scheme after scheme, and to put forth some lifelong endeavor, for the evangelization of this "nerve center of civilization and Christianity."

Many local churches—especially Anglican, Congregational, and Baptist—have taken up this home missionary work, mingling physical and social with evangelistic ministries, as their special vocation. Besides, there have been started three remarkable movements of wider scope, which may be taken as fairly representative of the whole reclamatory undertaking.

These are the Social Settlement, the Wesleyan Forward Movement, and the Salvation Army.

All three of these movements, it will be seen, have adopted the principle of *adaptation* as their dominant working principle, and all have followed the same general methods as the Open Church.

III

The idea of the Social Settlement took shape under the influence of such men as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Arnold—men of high culture and of Christian humanitarian impulses, on whose hearts the distressing economic and social conditions of English city life lay as an intolerable burden.

An ancient university, with its single-minded devotion to scholarship or culture, and its cloistered intellectual life, away from the stir of the streets, mills, and market places, and from the homes of the people, might seem to be the most unpromising of places in which to originate a warm-hearted, brotherly movement for enriching the lot of the poor. But it is not so. Investigating all subjects of human interest, the university studies the human being himself, and in his social no less than in his other relations; so that it may well be found fostering a spirit of humanity. At any rate it was in Oxford University that the idea of the educated sharing their advantages with the least favored sections of society, by actually making a home among them, first assumed the form of the University, or Social, Settlement.

By making a home among them: here is to be seen the most distinctive mark of the Settlement—not so much in its spirit of fraternity as in its specific method of continuous social contact, or life-sharing.

Toynbee Hall was opened in Whitechapel, the most miserable and notoriously immoral district of London, in the year 1885. The life of the young man, Arnold Toynbee, through the inspiration of whose example it was founded, may be taken as typical of its aims and methods. The son of a well-known medical specialist, a distinguished student of Oxford, of thoughtful temperament and frail bodily health, he took up his residence in Whitechapel, and, unto the day of his untimely death, dwelt among its wretched inhabitants, that he might help them to live better and happier lives.

The educated young men, chiefly college graduates, who have since resided in the Hall, would live such a life of manly helpfulness. By teaching, libraries, lectures, art exhibitions, country outings, social evenings with reading and music, and, above all, through fellowship, with no spirit of patronage or feeble sentimentalism, but as neighbors and elder brothers, they would lift up the despairing, reform the vicious, and elevate the lives of the workingmen about them.

From this beginning the movement has extended not only in "outcast London" but to various cities of Great Britain and the United States.⁵ And it has shown itself to be everywhere at heart a Christian missionary undertaking.⁶

⁵Strong, "Social Progress" (1904), pp. 218-220.

⁶"This ideal [that of the university] of culture is

Some of the Settlements—as, for example, Oxford House and Mansfield House in London, and The Commons in Chicago—are distinctly religious institutions; all of them are giving practical effect to the spirit of self-sacrificing brotherhood which finds its highest expression in the gospel of the Kingdom.

IV

The Wesleyan Forward Movement received its first creative impulse from the Mission Halls of the Congregational Union, and the pamphlet, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," that was sent forth from them in October, 1883. Its organization dates from the year 1885. Under the able leadership of Hugh Price Hughes and others,

essentially social, missionary, communicative. Given a group of persons possessed by these modern conceptions, and a certain concerted effort at betterment of life is sure to follow. Persons under the spell of the word *duty* and charged with sympathy, inspired by a religious view of the world, will somehow attempt to reread the life of Jesus Christ." (Henderson, "Social Settlements," p. 83.)

"Mansfield House is a University Settlement, founded for practical helpfulness, in the name of Jesus Christ, in all that affects human welfare. We war, in the Master's name, against all evil—selfishness, injustice, vice, disease, starvation, ignorance, ugliness, and squalor; and seek to build up God's kingdom in brotherhood, righteousness, purity, health, truth, and beauty." (Creed of Mansfield House.)

it has found a most fruitful field in London, East and West, and has given rise to similar movements in other English cities and elsewhere.

It was a bold innovation, and consequently much neglected or spoken against by many of those to whom it might have looked as its natural supporters.

The missionary work of the Wesleyans in the city had been done with preaching and prayer services in inexpensive chapels meagerly supported, and by no means under the ablest superintendence that the Church might have commanded. It is an old and almost everywhere a still familiar method. But it had never proved successful among the unchurched millions of the English metropolis. It had failed to arrest attention and awaken interest. The down-town churches themselves, once strong and flourishing, were diminishing in membership, some of them ready to be abandoned, through the removal of their members to the more desirable residential localities, and the failure to gather in the less well-to-do classes which were still in multitudes about their doors. Instead of advancing, as in the days of their early triumphs, the Wesleyans seemed to be losing hold, especially on their peculiar inheritance, the poor.⁸

It was in these circumstances that Hugh Price Hughes, when asked by his Conference to take

⁸McCulloch, "The Open Church for the Unchurched," pp. 33-40.

charge of the new movement, gave his consent only on condition that social methods be freely employed, to meet the needs of the people and prepare the way of the kingdom of God, and that the Church's best resources in men and money be devoted to the undertaking. "The old methods of aggression," he said, "are as suitable in these stirring days as the stagecoach, the tinder box, and the wooden ship."⁹ The proposed conditions were accepted. The Wesleyans put their best men and many thousands of silver and gold into the new enterprise. At the present time they are investing nearly a million dollars in the erection and furnishing of mission halls in London, and over four millions in the same work in other cities.¹⁰

But just as the great mechanical inventions were regarded at first by many good and sensible people with indifference or antagonism, so has it been, from age to age, with the new methods and means devised for adapting the unchangeable gospel of Christ to the ever-changing circumstances of time. It is related that when the illustrious French pulpit orator, Bossuet, asked the philosopher Leibnitz whether he could find a way to prevent the perpetual variations of Protestantism, that brilliant intellectual pathfinder replied: "It suits us, Monseigneur, to belong to this moving

"Life of Hugh Price Hughes," by his daughter, pp. 203-205, 512.

¹⁰McCulloch, "The Open Church," p. 53.

and eternally variable Church." That was the sentiment of the leaders in the Forward Movement. To reform the gospel was not in all their thoughts, but to make the wisest possible use of it—to develop into greater effectiveness the modes of its application to the needs of men.

Were they reminded that the "old and well-tried ways" were good, and should be forever followed? The answer was obvious enough. Their ecclesiastical founder, with all his caution, conservatism, and unaffected veneration for the past, was the most daring of innovators. He felt the mystery and might of the old, but dwelt not therein. He would utilize street preaching, lay preaching, the class meeting, the itinerancy, autocratic government, any not unrighteous expedient, however novel, that the success of his ministry seemed to demand. But the methods for evangelizing an England of villages in the eighteenth century are not the most successful methods for evangelizing an England of cities in our present restless and perilous age. To follow Wesley was to be always ready for the doing of some new thing. "Not parasites on the past, but pioneers of the future."

The method of the Movement is that of a central Mission Hall with a number of Open Churches connected with it. The Hall, which in some cases was a down-town chapel that had been deserted by its congregation, and on the eve of abandonment, is also organized on the open church

plan, and becomes a center of helpful Christian ministries to thousands of attendants.

Its Sunday services are marked by such features as the Boys' Brigade; the Sunday school; the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon (for men, with music and an address on some subject of interest); the Workers' Board (at five o'clock in the evening, with tea, an address, and prayer); the circuit of the brass band through the streets of the neighborhood about six o'clock, followed by distributors of tracts and announcements; the going forth of various little companies to hold cottage prayer meetings and lodging-house prayer meetings; the evening evangelistic services, with music by the orchestra, and a strong sermon or address, at which there will probably be professions of conversion; and perhaps toward midnight, for the sake of the men and women just coming out of the saloons, a stereopticon service.

During the week the Hall is kept regularly open, and affords accommodations for evangelistic meetings, the Men's Clubs, the Mothers' Meeting, Sewing Classes, Cooking Classes. In connection with the mission are such institutions as the Penny Bank, the Provident Club, the Hospital, the Servants' Registry, the Soup Kitchen, and others. There is much freedom and sociability, but every meeting is under earnest moral leadership; and Christian obedience is the keynote of it all.

The Hall is the center of administration to its

group of affiliated Open Churches, and it simply multiplies its work through them.

The superintendent of a mission must be a minister, but most of the work is done by laymen and without pay.

Why should the Hall be called by that name rather than by the name *church* or *chapel*? Because the latter names are unattractive or even forbidding to many of the people, while the name *hall* is not. Here, for example, is a group of ten or twelve houses or apartments occupied by non-church-going workingmen. Now if it should transpire that one of these men has begun to attend church or chapel, he is more or less ostracized by the rest. They look upon him as having entered into other associations, foreign to their sympathies; and thus the influence of society tends to draw him back. But he may frequent a hall and hear music or lectures or sermons, and attend sociables, religious meetings, and what not, without any compromise of social standing among his companions. George Fox made it a matter of conscience not to apply the name *church* to any house of worship. "Steeple-house" was his derogatory term. The Wesleyans are older and wiser: they simply leave off the name where it would cause their brother to stumble. "To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak."

V

The other of these three organized endeavors to answer "the bitter cry of outcast London" has become a widely extended institution. William Booth, its founder, was a Methodist preacher at the age of seventeen. In the year 1861, at thirty-two years of age, he gave himself up wholly to evangelistic work, apart from all organic church connection. In 1865 he organized in East London the "Christian Mission." About ten years thereafter, he named this mission, which meantime had developed, under his leadership, strong military features, "The Salvation Army."

The fundamental principle on which the "Army" is organized is that of strict obedience to orders, for the sake of the conquest of men, soul and body, to Jesus Christ.¹¹ There is a commander in chief, the "General," under whom it serves in all the thirty-nine countries and colonies into which it has up to this time extended its operations. His power is autocratic. The Army can occupy no new field, nor undertake any new work, without his authority. All officers above the rank of "staff captain" are appointed either directly by him or with his indirect approval. All property is held in trust by him or his appointees. All literature, music, songs, titles, and uniforms

¹¹"Orders and Regulations for Soldiers of the Salvation Army," pp. 99, 100.

are under his regulation. He appoints his own successor.¹²

Women are eligible, equally with men, to all offices and forms of service. As a matter of fact, they fill nearly half the official positions. The woman's call to preach is strongly maintained on scriptural and other grounds.

From the first, family life has been greatly honored, and minute directions are given for its regulation.¹³ The officer's wife must be a Salvationist, the home a strictly Christian home, the children trained for the service of the Army. Here a bright example appears in General and Mrs. Booth themselves, whose marriage and home life are described as ideal, and whose children have followed in their footsteps.

It was about the year 1887 that the Army, whose work had hitherto been purely evangelistic, began to enlarge its plans so as to include social service. It now numbers between six and seven hundred social institutions for the poor. The principles on which they are conducted are those of gratuitous assistance in cases of extreme necessity; and more especially friendly coöperation—in the way of providing work, stimulating self-respect, and offering instruction in some method of gaining a livelihood—with those who are willing

¹²"The Whys and Wherefores of the Salvation Army," pp. 5-7.

¹³Bramwell Booth, "Servants of All," p. 99.

to help themselves. The highest object, always kept in view, is their personal salvation.

Like the Society of Friends, the Salvation Army, having no ordained ministry or administration of sacraments, does not seek to be known as a church. It is a non-ecclesiastical religious order. Its leading doctrines, which have been fully and unequivocally defined, are those of Methodism. Its moral code shows a rigid, pure, and elevated standard of Christian character and conduct. Its attitude toward the churches is that of a common aim and of practical helpfulness, but with entire independence. Theoretically its members may also be church members, but the claim which it makes upon their loyalty and service practically cuts them off from membership in any other Christian body. Many of its converts, however, do become members of some church.¹⁴

Such entire separateness from the Christian churches as organized, with their teaching, sacraments, and fellowship, must be accounted a serious defect in this unique evangelistic agency. Whose is the fault and in what direction may be found the remedy—let the wise-hearted determine.

It must also be admitted that such an organization, with its often grotesque spectacular methods, and its excessive multiplication of military

¹⁴"Whys and Wherefores of the Salvation Army," pp. 3, 4. See also Catherine Booth's "The Salvation Army in Relation to Church and State."

terms—its brigadiers, colonels, adjutants, sergeant majors, cadets, barracks, articles of war, cartridges, and the rest—will offend the taste of many cultured Christian people. What is of more serious concern, it has seemed to many chargeable with an irreverent handling of sacred themes.

Let us remember, however, that amid the wide divergences of taste in any community, concerning which it has become proverbial that there is “no disputing,” Christian wisdom will require that means and methods shall be adapted to the people, whether cultured or crude, whom it is intended to serve. And as to reverence, care must be taken not to confound the inner spirit with the impression which its outward forms may produce upon the mind of an unsympathetic observer.

Certainly (if an *ad hominem* argument be admissible) the ordinary fashionable Christian congregation cannot consistently find fault with the Salvationist from this point of view. Because there can hardly be a doubt as to which makes the nearer approach to sacrilege, the music and knee drill of the zealous working Christians of the Salvation Army, or the conduct of congregational worship by flippant or immoral singers, who do not profess, it may be, even to believe the sacred words which, with a purely professional motive, they are taking upon their lips. Nor shall we find anything in the Salvation headquarters or barracks more painfully “grotesque” than the in-

consistency between creed and conduct, worship and service, profession and practice, in many a "respectable" church.

"Among others who testified"—let us hear a thoughtful critic's story—"was a girl in a Salvation Army bonnet and the regulation dress, and a stoker, fresh from some steamer in the London docks, whose grimy face did not prevent his taking part in the service, much to the delight of the good Canon, who sighed as he said, 'We could not get such men to St. Paul's.' When we left, we walked back through the city. Canon Liddon was deeply impressed. He was at first somewhat silent, but after a time he said: 'It fills me with shame. I feel guilty when I think of it myself.' He continued musingly: 'When I think of these poor people, with their imperfect grasp of the truth. And yet what contrast between what they do and what we are doing.'"¹⁵

Will the Salvation Army spend its force, serve a temporary purpose, and then, through inherent limitations and defects, disappear? Will it degenerate into the merely formal and spectacular? Or will it persist, gradually adapting itself to new environments and demands, through the coming generations? Let those who, unaffected by sundry warning examples, are still ready to assume the office of ecclesiastical prophet, answer the question.

¹⁵Stead, "Life of Mrs. Booth," p. 96.

So much, then, as a cursory view of the extension of organized Christianity in its own neighborhoods and at the present day. But it is also a typical view. For the laws of life do not change; the constitution of man, physical and mental, is the same as in the beginning; and so likewise is the divine constitution of the Church of God. In principle, though not in form and fact, the Church is now just what it was when the father of the faithful, priest, prophet, administrator of his house-church, commanded his family together with himself to keep the way of the Lord; and the impulse of expansion, movement, progress, is an essential element of its life. It was constituted for advance, not for marking time; for conquest, not for holding its own. It must keep moving on or shrivel and sicken where it stands. "The army that remains in the trenches is defeated already."

Let us, therefore, as we turn this leaf, look backward toward that early and formative age, taking ancient Jerusalem instead of modern London as our view point, and mark the Forward Movement of the Church in the Christian centuries.

V

THE CONSTITUTIONAL FORWARD MOVEMENT: ABROAD

THE Church of Israel, it must be acknowledged, was no missionary society. Its economy was that of education and defense. True, the door stood open and whatever Gentile might wish to enter was welcomed. Let him submit to the ordinances and be numbered with the household of faith. Its most sacred privileges were freely granted him, as if he too were a child of Abraham. But no outsider need expect to be sought for and urged to apply for admission.

I

Israel was a child, God's son, and, though wayward, loved unto the end.¹ He must be taught the name of Jehovah, but might not be charged with an apostolic mission or permitted to mingle freely with idolatrous peoples. The danger of the corruption of his own faith was too great. Said the unwilling prophet of Moab in his parable,

Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.²

¹Hosea xi. ²Num. xxiii. 9.

Was ever a priest appointed to build an altar in heathendom? Even the prophets with their far-reaching vision were raised up for the home field. There was no other. The Lord of the prophets himself was heard to say, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Palestine, a little land, yet a miniature of the world, with the wide desert on the south and east, the trackless ocean toward the setting sun, and no great nation on the north, was the suitable place of training for the elect people. There, separated from the powerful idolatries not only of the West but also of Egypt, Assyria, and Chaldea (though claimed as a subject people by all three of these pagan nations), they might receive the revelation of God as Jehovah, the Eternal, the Almighty, the Holy, who would yet make himself known through them to the farthest continents and isles of the sea. "I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will . . . give thee . . . for a light of the Gentiles."³

But here at least was a significant and fruitful truth,—Israel the light of the nations. Once introduced into the thought and grasped by the faith of the Church, it must have a momentous history. In it lay the potent germ of all evangelism. Israel must hear it so as to know it, and know it so as to tell it to all the world. It is not a truth for any people, nor for any single soul, to receive and

³Isa. xlii. 6.

keep silent. So, the prophets even of the pre-Christian time were ready to cry, "Who would not fear thee, O King of the nations?"⁴ One of them, indeed, "the first apostle to the Gentiles" (though, in his angry impatience at Jehovah's compassion, "not worthy to be called an apostle"), was sent to Assyria, that he might bring its wicked capital city to repentance.⁵

Moreover, when, from the time of the Captivity onward, the people, having been cured at last of their idolatries, were caused to move to and fro among the nations,⁶ they carried with them the monotheistic faith, the oracles of God, and the lofty sustaining hope of Messiah's kingdom. Though for the most part legalistic and unloving, they were a kind of missionaries, apart from their own choice, to testify in the presence of age-long paganism that God is one and that he is the righteous Judge of the whole earth. Thus were they able to influence earnest minds dissatisfied with polytheism and empty philosophies to acknowledge the true and living God. The prophecy was fulfilled: "Ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."⁷ So the way was preparing for the Christian evangel when it should be published.

⁴Jer. x. 7.

⁵Jonah iv.

⁶Amos ix. 9.

⁷Zech. viii. 23.

II

At the cross of Jesus, and under the baptismal fires of Pentecost, the Church found itself in a very different attitude toward the peoples of the world. It became, in spirit and form, in doctrine and administration, distinctly aggressive. No longer safeguarded by geographical boundaries and national religious rites from the contamination of false religions, it went everywhere. The word was no longer, Let the people come to us and receive the law of Jehovah, if they will. It was now, We will go forth to them, at all hazards, and tell the constraining story of the cross. Thus was the prophetic vision of the wide world's enlightenment through Israel becoming true in the Fulfiller of the law and the prophets. The mystery of Christ, "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body," which in former generations had been but foreshadowed, was now to be everywhere proclaimed.

Is it not a memorable fact that our Lord, while instituting so little, prescribing no ecclesiastical polity, yet, so far as he gave outward form to his Church at all, did make it a missionary organization? The only company of men whom he personally taught and trained, and commissioned as his chief witness-bearers in the ministry of reconciliation, were explicitly instructed by him to go and preach to "the whole creation." He called them to him that he might in due time send them

forth from him, yet abiding with them forevermore.^s Also, the two sacramental rites that he instituted were given, one in commemoration of his blood of the New Covenant shed "for many unto remission of sins," and the other in direct connection with the Great Commission, as a sign of the new birth of the soul and the mode of entrance into the visible communion of Christian believers. The Lord's Supper and baptism are missionary symbols.

Moreover, when another chief witness was needed, the particular office that he must fill was not a local pastorate, nor a national apostleship. On the contrary, he was to go farther than all the apostles that were before him into the regions beyond—the missionary to the nations.

Christianity is both a revelation and a redemption—the disclosure of the fatherhood of God and the deliverance of a sin-oppressed world, in Jesus Christ. We might imagine this revelation and this redemption to have been given in sight of all mankind; but such was not the Divine method. They were given in the presence of chosen witnesses; and upon these witnesses and their successors in the faith was laid the responsibility of declaring them to the world. They must be universally published; for whatever men may know without the gospel, they cannot know that in Jesus Christ the Redeemer they may enter the

^sMark iii. 14; Matt. xxviii. 20.

life of sonship to God. But all men, whether savage or civilized, whether a tribe of cannibals or a world power, whether Hottentots or Japanese, need to know, and are entitled to know, these supreme truths of Christ in the human race.

Therefore the attitude of the Church, its constitution, its very organic law, by the hand of the Lord upon it from the beginning, is that of missionary evangelism at home and abroad. One word of Jesus suggests it all—the word “apostles” (*missionaries, sent ones*). So, when a congregation repeats in concert, in the language of the Nicene Creed, the title “one Catholic and Apostolic Church,” in what is it professing faith so much as in the essentially missionary character of the Church of Christ? This character only can make any particular congregation, or church, or ministry, or man, apostolic.

Could it have been intended that the forward movement of the Church should cease when the last of the apostles entered into rest? It did not cease, but went on steadily till, by the beginning of the fourth century, Christianity had penetrated every province of the Roman Empire.

Soon thereafter it was legalized and thoroughly nationalized.

III

But a national Church, while favorable, in its organization, to the extension of an accepted faith, or at least of its profession, within the territory of

the nation itself, is not as such favorable to foreign evangelization.⁹ One is prepared to find, therefore, that under the Emperor Constantine and his successors paganism was overthrown by a combination of Christian teaching and legal enactments, throughout the empire, but also that the apostolic spirit of unlimited love and enterprise was lacking. Why should not India have been evangelized?¹⁰

The Church, organizing her forces in their accumulated strength, and with the Christly yearning that all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, is what we do not see.

It is true that under Charles the Great the Holy Roman Empire did stretch forth its hand for the conversion of many heathen people. But it was

⁹Compare the colonial missions of the National Protestant Churches with the world-wide Roman propaganda.

¹⁰Indeed, the imperialized Church showed no great zeal for the conversion of the pagans within the empire itself. "The bishops of the chief cities of the provinces of the West were mainly Roman, surrounded by a Roman clergy, and, though they were not without a missionary element, they ministered mainly to the wants of the Roman population. Outside the centers of that population, they can hardly be said to have existed. Here and there, on the large estates of Roman owners, there was a chapel for Christian service; but the mass of the Celtic peasantry was unconverted." (Hatch, "Growth of Church Institutions," pp. 9, 10.)

conversion by the sword. The idolaters were crushed, at one and the same blow, into submission to the emperor and to the priest, the State and the State Church. In the case of the Saxons, for example, the death penalty was attached to the crime of practicing the religious rites they had received from their forefathers. It was a spiritual tyranny unworthy even of the False Prophet, the Dark Ages its only apology.¹¹

To say that the after effects were beneficial will excuse it to those only who hold that men may do evil, if they will, for the sake of a hoped-for good. It is another "far-flung battle line" than that which bathes its glittering steel in the blood of a weaker race of brother men, in which the Divine Love has aligned his forces for the conquest of the world.

We shall have to look elsewhere than to Chris-

"Worthy of note, in contrast with this policy of the "pious and *peace-giving* Emperor," and as showing the more Christian way of Christianizing, was the conduct of the newly converted English King Ethelbert two hundred years before: "Of their belief and conversion [it] is said that the king was so evenly glad that he, however, forced none to the Christian manner [of worship], but that those who turned to belief and baptism he more inwardly loved, as they were fellow-citizens of the heavenly kingdom. For he had learned from his teachers and from the authors of his health that Christ's service should be of good will, not of compulsion." (Bæda, "Ecclesiastical History of England," XXVI. 3.)

tian princes and their ecclesiasticism for the missionary policy of the Middle Ages. It will be found in two of the three main forces of mediæval Christianity—in the papacy and monasticism.

The explanation is easy enough. The papacy knew nothing of national or racial limitations. It claimed universal jurisdiction: the world was its diocese. Therefore not some one empire only, not the whole of Christendom only, but infidel and heathen regions, the whole world, must be subdued to the obedience of the Roman faith. As for the monastery, it likewise was non-national and non-racial—in idea, simply and purely religious. The monk was without patriotism. Nor was he a cosmopolitan. His country was beyond the sky. So, when the monastery had reached its advanced stage, and become not a mere religious retreat or idle imprisonment from the world, but largely a school of preparation for work in the world, its messengers went in various directions afar. To strengthen the hand of any secular government was not their object. Geographical boundaries were left out of their plans. They would win men of any race or clime to the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord—and, in many instances, of the pope as his vicar on earth.

It was near the close of the sixth century that this period of missionary activity began. The Benedictine order, whose most powerful representative was Pope Gregory the Great—"Gregory

the holy man, who was in lore and deed the highest," as Bæda describes him—took a leading part in the movement. But we can do no more in this rapid sketch than recall some of the chief names. Columba, missionary founder of the Abbey of Iona (or Icolmkill, "the island of Columba of the churches"), may represent the independent missionary work of the monasteries. Augustine preaching his sermon through an interpreter to Ethelbert the English king, or leading his grave procession of twoscore monks,

Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer,

and bearing the uplifted cross, into the town of Canterbury (in 596); Boniface in Germany (719-755); Anskar, "Apostle of the North," in Denmark and Sweden (826-865)—all of them monks in the immediate service of the pope—may exemplify the union of papacy and monastery in Christian missions.

But the aggressive idea of the monastery found its most distinct expression in the Mendicant orders. It may be seen in its purest embodiment in the Franciscans of the first half of the thirteenth century. Here was an organization of itinerant evangelists traversing Christendom, under the direction of their chief, ministering to the ignorant and the wretched, to Christian and unbeliever. Francis, the gentle and good, their founder and, notwithstanding his illiteracy and fanaticism, their

best representative, made bold to preach even before the Sultan of Egypt—though with no encouraging result. Thus did monasticism, beginning as organized asceticism, develop into a form of organized service.

Only deplorable are the doctrinal and moral corruptions, the worm at the heart of the rose, in the extension of the Mediæval Church. It was to a paganized form of Christianity that the converts were gained. The minister had long since been lured into playing the magician. Incredible hardships were accepted, uttermost self-sacrifice endured, untimely death welcomed, in behalf of a leader, a cause, a sentiment, wherein was mingled much of the false and unworthy; for it is by no means pure Christianity alone that has its martyrs and its heroes. But such things shall not blind our eyes to the genuine Christian love and devotion of many missionaries in these hazardous church-extension movements. They bore the Cross with bleeding hands, and followed it, groping, in their hearts.

How often is the real faith by which a man lives, and out of which all the martyrologies are written, misrepresented by his ritual or his creed! Here were half-enlightened men who had looked upon the face of the suffering and conquering Christ, whom whosoever shall really behold in faith and love is henceforth no longer his own but the servant of humanity in his name. Nor may

we depreciate the illustration afforded, in a dark and turbulent age, of the Church as a missionary organization.

IV

It would seem that the best possible work for foreign missions at this time would have been a radical reformation of Christendom. Displacing error with truth, such a revival must clothe message and messenger with a new spiritual power. To make the plant good is to spread and perpetuate the good, wherever the seed is scattered or the fruit eaten. For if the world is indeed one, and the true work of the Church one and the same work everywhere, incalculably effective upon other nations would be the effect of any moral and religious reform—say, that of temperance—thoroughly accomplished in the Christian nations. Health as well as disease is contagious: reformation is extension.

Nevertheless it cannot be said that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was immediately promotive of the missionary cause. Its two chief leaders, Luther and Calvin, did not have it upon their hearts to convert the heathen peoples. Luther, in fact, was under the impression that the world was about at its end. The hour would soon strike: no new lands were to be Christianized; at the very climax of their iniquity, now rapidly approaching, mankind would be condemned, and the elect few saved. Now this belief, while entirely

consistent with the preaching of the gospel in its power, here and there, as the way might be providentially opened, could yield no inspiration to any such universal undertaking as the missionary movement of our own time.

It must be acknowledged, also, that the prevalent theology of the divine sovereignty in human salvation was unfavorable, so far as its logical consequences were recognized, to the missionary enterprise.

With humiliation and pain let it be added that the religious wars in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Great Britain, and the virulent theological controversies of Protestantism, chilled and depraved the heart of Christian love.

Accordingly the lack of a missionary spirit could hardly fail to become apparent in the polity of the early Protestant Churches. They were not in any serious sense organizations for the universal spread of the gospel, but national establishments for the religious upbuilding of their respective countries.¹² Two hundred years or more

¹²For instance, one would doubtless have to look a long time through the Calvinian literature of that age in order to find such a description of the Church as would be held as a commonplace by the followers of Calvin to-day—to find it described as “a divinely appointed missionary organization, complete in all its parts, for concentrating the strength of the people on the work of evangelizing the world.” (Stuart Robinson, “The Church of God” (1858), pp. 119, 120.)

must pass before there shall be formed within these churches missionary societies with the salvation of the distant places of the earth as their object, and before the Church as a whole shall come to realize that itself, in the divine idea, is a missionary society and must be so organized.¹³

V

The Protestant pioneers in missions were a people never large in numbers, nor of much account in the eyes of the world, but from the beginning till now an out-and-out missionary brotherhood—namely, the Unity of the Brethren. Not only in spirit, in history, and in ritual, but distinctly in polity, is the Moravian Church a missionary organization. While as yet it numbered only six hundred members, ten years after the settlement at Herrnhut, it sent out its first missionaries. And from that time to the present the goodly succession has been kept up, not through missionary

¹³“This command [Mark xvi. 15], corroborated by others of equivalent import, and enforced by the very nature of the Christian doctrine, and by the spirit of Christian charity, is now understood and acknowledged, in a manner altogether new to the Church, to be of universal obligation; so that no Christian, how obscure soever may be his station, or small his talents, or limited his means, can be held to stand altogether excused from the duty of fulfilling in some way the last mandate of his Lord.” (Isaac Taylor, “Natural History of Enthusiasm” (1849), p. 250.)

societies but directly by the Church as such. According to the statistics of a few years ago, there was one Moravian missionary to every sixty members of the home Church.¹⁴

On the first day of August, 1738, a presbyter of the Church of England appeared in Herrnhut, as a student of the Moravian teaching and discipline. A thoughtful seeker of the truth, he came to learn of men whose scholarship and culture were not comparable to his own. Nor was this his first acquaintance with the Moravian brethren. Two years before, on his way to the English colony of Georgia, as a missionary in the service of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, he had enjoyed fellowship with them, and had been deeply impressed with their serene and joyful behavior during a storm at sea. Soon after returning to England he was helped by one of this same fervent brotherhood, Peter Böhler, to find the way of conscious salvation through faith only. And now John Wesley has come for a two weeks' visit to their mother Church, that he may learn something more from the people to whom he already feels so deeply indebted.

After a brief period of coöperation with the Moravians, Wesley found scope for his own Christian teaching and unique organizing genius in the formation of the United Societies. These he made, both in spirit and polity, a missionary organ-

¹⁴"Moravian Manual," p. 53.

ization; first for the work all about them at home, and afterwards, in addition, for the foreign field.

It was not long before this forward movement touched the shores of America. Through local and itinerant preachers, and other Christian witnesses, men and women, societies were gathered in the West Indies, the American Colonies, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland; and there was developed the Methodist Episcopal Church, whose first bishop, after thirty years of evangelistic labors on four continents, died at sea while making a missionary voyage to Ceylon.

But it is a larger course of development that we must here take note of. The labors of Wesley and Whitefield, with their coadjutors, resulted in the Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century; and it was under the influence of this revival that the great missionary organizing of the Church began which made the nineteenth century distinctively the century of missions.¹⁵

¹⁵"The Wesleyans took from the Brethren many points in their system—the watch night, the love feasts, *the idea that the whole Church is a missionary society.*" (Ker, "History of Preaching," p. 237.)

"It was with the dawn of a new era of faith in England, at the close of the century, that the missionary spirit of the nineteenth century was begotten. . . . The great religious revival, starting with the labors of the Wesleys and Whitefield, gave the impulse to recent modern missions." (Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia," Art. Missions.)

This hundred years' work has been done in part by missionary societies under the patronage of particular churches, and in part by the churches themselves directly, through the adoption of a missionary polity. American Congregationalism, for example, conducts its missionary operations through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and through similar agencies. In Episcopal Methodism, on the other hand, the Church itself has become a missionary body, every one of whose congregations must contribute annually to the extension of its work in foreign fields, and every one of whose pastors, presiding elders, and bishops is charged with a duty in this department of church life as strongly and distinctly as in any other. A similar distinction exists between the national churches—the Church of Scotland carrying on its foreign missions directly, as a part of its purpose and policy, while the other national establishments are not thus organized. In both cases the essential principle is the same; but in one case it becomes a recognized element in the whole ecclesiastical life and polity. That missionary method should thus be wrought into the very structure of a church, even as the missionary principle is inwrought in the very structure of Christianity itself, would seem to be in complete harmony with the organic word of Christ on the Mount of Ascension.

The first great event of this century of missions

was the formation, largely through the influence of William Carey, in the year 1792, of the Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen. One of the last noteworthy events of the century was the signing of a declaration—"I am willing and desirous, God willing, to become a foreign missionary"—by a hundred young men, in the year 1886, at Mount Hermon, Mass.; for this act was the inception of a movement in connection with which some three thousand young men and women have already set sail from America for the foreign field—the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions.¹⁶

As the churches have by this time very well learned, through experience, this undertaking calls for broad and thorough organization. It is a vast and varied work. Evangelistic it must ever be, else it ceases to be truly Christian. But the gospel has many worthy allies. It will inspire, direct, and utilize much educational work, much ministration to disease in the hospital and the dispensary, much publication of Holy Scripture and of Christian literature, much industrial and social betterment. It had such allies at the beginning of its history, in the days of Jesus and the apostles: shall it not be accompanied by them, in ever-varying forms, unto the end? It will both civilize and save. It will civilize that, as the supreme object,

¹⁶ "The First Two Decades of the Student Volunteer Movement," Report of Executive Committee, 1906.

it may save. It will send Livingstone to explore Central Africa, Duff to establish a school system in India, Mackenzie to teach and practice the art of medicine in China. All the while it will offer the one Bread of Life, the only Lord and Saviour, to every people and to every soul.

There is need of patience and of unwearied self-giving; many adversaries still stand about the open doors; many questions still await their answers; but the word of the Lord is from everlasting and will not be falsified. We do well to believe that as the swift-footed decades of the twentieth century fulfill their course the tens of thousands of evangelical missionaries and native helpers of its first decade may be increased to hundreds of thousands, and its million and a half Christian communicants be more than proportionately multiplied. Nor shall we dismiss as a mere air-built dream of youth the ideal and watchword of the Student Volunteers—"The evangelization of the world in this generation."

And now, recurring to those aspects of our subject with which this whole course of study began, let us linger another moment on the question. What are the marks of the church of Christ? It might be answered: A "congregation of saints," "the gospel rightly preached," the profession of "the true religion," "the pure word of God preached," "a godly discipline exercised," "the sacraments duly administered." And these defi-

nitions of the several revered historic symbols from which they have been quoted are true and good. But like many another credal definition, they were framed with more or less of a controversial purpose. Nor did they originate in a missionary age. Certainly if taken for descriptions as well as definitions, their inadequacy is manifest.¹⁷ To faith and preaching and sacraments and discipline must be added world-wide service. Something as to *creed*, something as to *ordinances*, something as to *spiritual life*, these are indeed the marks of a church of Christ, making it recognizable as such. But something more. In the creed, in the ordinances, in the spiritual life, each

17"“To this hour the accepted Congregational definitions of a particular visible Church of Christ are lamentably deficient in clear recognition of that very end for which Christ called all the Churches into being, and gave them the law of their life.” (Ladd, “Principles of Church Polity,” p. 360.) The assertion would be hardly less true with the word *Congregational* stricken out.

A recent definition, including as it does the law of love as the rule of Christians’ lives, more nearly approaches the missionary idea: “The Church of God is the universal society of believers in Jesus Christ, scattered throughout the world, who are nevertheless one in him because they acknowledge him as their only Head, because his Spirit dwells in them, and because they acknowledge the law of love contained in his gospel as the rule of their lives.” (“Catechism of the Methodist Episcopal Churches.”)

and all, there is a momentous implication—the implication of an unceasing evangelic ministry to men. The New Testament doctrine is that of a believing, worshiping, disciplined, and *sent-forth* Church.

The knowledge of what anything is may be expected to show what it is *for*. To know the Church of Christ is to know that the end for which its foundations were laid by the Master Builder's hand, an end ever to be kept in view by the whole company of its builders, is the realization of God's kingdom on earth.

VI

CONSUMMATION: THE KINGDOM OF GOD REALIZED

To a contemplative mind looking out upon the world as it is, the shadow oftentimes lies deeper than the sunshine. It is not the sufferings of irrational creatures, the whole world groaning and travailing together in pain until now: though this must be felt as one of the painfully oppressive problems. It is not the poverty and ignorance, the privations, the manifold weaknesses and inevitable griefs of men: though this may well make every friend of his race sick at heart. It is the deadly shadow of sin. It is ingrained and universal moral evil. If people would always do the right and live together in love and kindness, all problems might be hopefully studied, all evils hopefully endured. But men have always and everywhere corrupted their way on the earth. The greed, oppression, fraud, sensuality, crime, social impurity, inhumanity, hypocrisy, the groans of the prisoner and the slave, the cruelty to womanhood, the bitter cry of wronged little children—it is these persistent sins and these sufferings consequent upon sin, all over the world, that appall the stoutest sensitive heart. God mercifully limits the sym-

pathetic imagination, forbidding its taking more than a little space within the range of vision at any one time; else would it be paralyzed with pain and unfitted for any service.

What shall the end be? The same monotony of sin and suffering through an endless future? or some deeper degeneracy hastening on to a total extinction? or is there a better age to come?

What if this world should some day be remade into one great Commonwealth of God?

I

In one's meditation upon this question it may be assumed that for all people always to do the right and live together in love and kindness is theoretically quite possible. It would not be, in the true sense of the word, unnatural, any more than civilization or art or literature is unnatural. It would indeed be contrary to the habit of men's lives, but in accordance with the constitution of their nature; for this natural constitution enthrones conscience and love as the ruling powers.

Moreover, there are many thousands of men and women that are actually living in righteousness and love. It is their constant aim not only to refrain from doing harm, but also positively to love and serve their fellows. The grace of God in Jesus Christ has made it possible for them to live the life of sonship to God and brotherhood to man. But what is actual in them is potential in all. To

suppose their number increased till the response of the human heart and will to the quickening touch of the Divine Spirit becomes a universal fact, is at least not an impossible conception. It would simply be the realization in spirit and character of his true nature by universal man. Is it, then, too much to expect of the creative purpose and redeeming grace of the Father of spirits?

Another thing which it would be well to remember in this connection is that the world is a realm of law. To a superficial view, indeed, there seems to be much confusion, endless accidents and collisions, labyrinthine mazes. "While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" But in fact there is nowhere an ungoverned object or event. Of the multitudinous occurrences that make up any hour of the world's history, not one can be shown that slips the leash of all-encompassing and immutable law.

That this is true of physical events is nowadays a commonplace. The clouds move with as perfect precision as the moon or the ocean tides. The comet is no more a wanderer than is the planet. The thistle down "caught and cuffed by the gale," tossed and twirled hither and thither, pursues its course and reaches its destination according to laws as ever-present and changeless as those which the earth herself observes in her stately march round the sun. But the same thing is true of the higher sphere of the soul. In this sphere is in-

tellectual movement—judgment, reasoning, thinking; but it can no more be done contrary to the laws of thought than the earth can make her revolutions, annual or diurnal, contrary to the laws of motion.

Here also is freedom and the moral life. Here vibrates that highest note of reality which we can know or have any conception of—namely, *personal being*. Men are thoughtless, but man thinks; men are unloving, but man loves; and so likewise while men are weak-willed and passive, man wills. Here is a personality, a self, with the power of self-determination.

This, it is true, opens the door to all manner of lawlessness, but not to the overthrow of law. One may violate, or *break*, a moral law in the sense of refusing to comply with its requirements, but not in the sense of corrupting or fracturing or in even an infinitesimal degree disturbing the law itself. That remains absolutely inviolable and eternal. The condemned criminal is under the laws of the land no less truly than is the most upright citizen; the one in disobedience suffering its penalties, the other in obedience enjoying its blessings. But much more is it impossible for a human soul to escape the operation of the moral law; for that would be to escape the operation of the will, which is an expression of the nature, of God himself.

Now it does not follow from the mere fact of

the universality of law, significant and sublime though it be, in a kingdom of souls, that perfect obedience with its resulting blessedness will be secured. So far as our reason can discern, there is no absolute need-be that a moral government should issue in a millennium. But moral government is at least one condition of a millennium. The immanence of God in the world, making known his righteous and beneficent will, writing it in men's hearts, administering it in their daily life, offers a solid standing ground from which to look forth into futurity and listen for any voice of hope and promise that may fall upon the ear. Here, as well as in the way of personal salvation, the law may be a preparation for the gospel.

That "all is law" does not make it less likely but more that "all is love." Indeed, since according to the teaching of Jesus, moral love is the one law for the will of man,¹ in obedience to which he becomes like his Father who is in heaven,² it must be the one law of God's own will.

II

As a matter of fact, voices of hope and promise have always been heard by those who have ears to hear them. They have come attended with divine testimonials. Their record is in holy Scripture.

¹Matt. xxii. 36-40. ²Matt. v. 43-48.

The concurrent testimony of prophets, under both the Old and the New Covenant, with little to say of a past Paradise, tells of the blessed æon to come. There will be a revealing of the sons of God in which the whole creation shall share;³ a new heavens and a new earth in which dwells righteousness;⁴ a time of the restoration of all things "whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been ever of old."⁵

Above all, seeking instruction at the mouth of the Prophet of prophets, as to the supreme object of expectation and endeavor, we are bidden when we pray to say: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

To him who receives this great line of testimony as a revelation of the Eternal Will, the question is closed. God has spoken, declaring his purpose, and his word cannot fail.

But even a genuine faith may be stronger or weaker, and may be strengthened by evidential facts. It is true that a genuine faith is not constantly clamoring for this kind of evidence. It is an unbelieving and idolatrous generation that seeks after a sign. Nevertheless signs, of God's own choosing, are given, that men may see and believe. Else how shall we account for those which, in the freedom of all-powerful love and the wisdom of perfect self-restraint, Jesus wrought

³Rom. viii. 21. ⁴Isa. lxxv. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 13.

⁵Acts iii. 21.

among men? "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee."⁶ "Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake."⁷

Moreover, nobody need stumble at the thought of the universal coming of the kingdom, because of its mystery or seeming impossibility. For the whole world around us is a wonderland, none of whose phenomena could have been dreamed of apart from some teaching of experience, before the event; while the world of consciousness within is even a greater marvel. Every life, from that of the lichen to that of the man, begins, continues, and ends in impenetrable mystery.

No one can bury an ugly bulb in the muck at his feet and raise up a lily, or hold in his hand a dappled little egg from some nest in the woods and hear, across a few months' space, the song of a thrush, or contemplate with any degree of attentiveness the fact of human heredity, and then refuse to believe in any future event on the sole ground that present appearances are against the possibility of its occurrence. The scientific and philosophic mind will make no pretense of knowing the possibilities of "nature" or the purposes of the Creator, except as these have somehow been already disclosed. It will regard many things as unbelievable, but nothing, whether it be history or prediction, as too wonderful for belief.

⁶John ii. 11. ⁷John xiv. 11.

III

But where shall we look for signs which, being interpreted, confirm faith's expectation of the universal appearing and kingdom of Christ? The earth itself is offering them. "Speak to the earth," says the Wise Man of Uz, "and it shall teach thee."⁸ Let us, then, keep silence for a space and listen to this inarticulate teaching.

How did the earth with its inhabitants, as we know it, come to be? Who could ever have foreseen or predicted it?

Take only a few backward steps. There was a time when man had no existence. Not a city, or a house, or a book, or a garment, or any tool or implement; no speech, no thought, no worship; not an articulate voice, not an infant of days, not a human being anywhere on earth. Now, therefore, let any one consider, what was there visible or invisible at that time to justify the expectation that such a being as man, with his civilizations and literatures and religions, would ever make his appearance? Yet, as a matter of fact, in due time he did make his appearance. God framed his body out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man stood forth a living rational soul. Out of the dust the Creator raised up sons and daughters to himself.

Going back in imagination another step, the ob-

⁸Job xii. 8.

server finds no animal life on the earth. Abundance of plants, growing and dying, bearing fruit each after its kind, perpetuating their generations; but nothing whatever that can see or hear or move of its own will from place to place. No sensation. Not a lung or a bone or a nerve. Now who at that period of terrestrial history could have expected animated nature? Who could have foreseen the lion seeking his prey, or the tiger's "fearful symmetry," or "the splendid confidence of the eagle in the air," or the spider weaving his web and warily watching for his prey; or conceived the possibility of the thousand thousand species of sentient creatures, with all their sensibilities and powers, as they now throng earth, water, and air? But it came to pass. When the chosen epoch arrived, God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." And though we no more know *how* than did they at the time, it was so.

There was once even a lifeless earth. A huge unliving thing, nothing but rocks and waters: the sky black with clouds, streaming floods of rain, fierce winds sweeping through the gloom, volcanic fires everywhere breaking forth. There was a time when "the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep"—when, in the conceptions of science, there was nothing but an inconceivably hot liquid mass. Nothing

can live in such a world, and there is **nothing** in it to live.

How, then, are living things to begin to be? Who will venture to predict the emergence of so utterly new and strange an order of beings? But the breath of God falls upon the sterile rocks and waves, and lo, they are overspread with the mystery of life. Then, separated by an impassable gulf from mere vegetable vitality, in God's good time appears the higher life of reason, conscience, spirit. Human life-history in all its tragedy, in all its degradation, in all its sinfulness, in all its glory, begins.

Place side by side the primeval earth and the human world of the twentieth century. Out of that has arisen this. Shall it, then, be thought a thing incredible that out of this will arise the supremacy of Christ and the universal kingdom of God?

IV

Turning away now from the teaching of the earth, as epitomized in its own rock tablets (and on the opening pages of the Scripture revelation), and speaking to man alone, we shall hear from him no different story. The records of his past foretell a greater future: greater not only in wealth and knowledge, but greater also in moral and spiritual quality. Here as truly as in the sub-human realm, notwithstanding man's endowment with the solemn power of self-disposal, the hand of God may

be seen at work and the thread of his purpose discerned. Human progress is not a growth downward. The brighter view is the truer. Laws and government are growing better. Nations are settling their contentions by international arbitration, as never before. There is less cruelty to the weak and the criminal—certainly less than in England a century ago, when two hundred classes of offenses were punishable with death. There is more good will, more charity and help, more of the spirit of humanity. There is more sensitiveness to physical and social ills, and more effort to relieve them, than at any time in the past. There is less injustice between nation and nation, as between man and man. War is still an awful fact; but less frequent and less awful than in the ages when the same word (*hostis*) easily served for *foreigner* and *enemy*, or when the familiar characteristic of the springtime was “the return of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle,” or when the *væ victis* of the conqueror meant all possible inhuman infliction of outrage and suffering upon the vanquished. The heritage of the men of to-day, with all its fearsome evils, is the goodliest, as it is the latest, in the history of the world.

The idea of the kinship of the human race practically proved and perpetuated, is no longer incredible. At the Peace Congress of 1849, in the city of Paris, Victor Hugo, its president, in his opening address, exclaimed: “A day will come

when a cannon ball will be exhibited in public museums, just as an instrument of torture is now, and people will be amazed that such a thing could ever have been. A day will come when these two immense groups, the United States of America and the United States of Europe, will be seen placed in the presence of each other, extending the hand of fellowship across the ocean,—exchanging their produce, their commerce, their industries, their arts, their genius,—clearing the earth, peopling the desert, improving creation under the eye of the Creator, and uniting, for the good of all, these two irresistible and infinite powers, the fraternity of men and the power of God.” Shall we maintain that the half century of wars which has passed since this utterance of the eloquent idealist has shown him to be a mere

Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears?

Not without significance at this point is the rapidly increasing command of natural power with which God is now intrusting our race. It marks what has been fitly described as a notably higher stage of human progress—“the new epoch as developed by the manufacture of power.” Some knowledge and control of the powers of nature—of fire or of plant growth, for example—is necessary for even the lowest plane of civilization. But when, as it were only yesterday, men began to get possession of such forces as steam and electricity—

whose "touch is flame" and whose "kiss is death"—they began to change incalculably and in every direction the life of the world. It was an event to be written in all subsequent history when Magellan, the bold Portuguese sailor, sacrificing his life in the enterprise, made a voyage round the globe. Think of the wings of lightning on which men are mingling and speaking and dealing with one another, round and round the globe, to-day. The muscular force employed in erecting the Great Pyramid has made it a wonder of the ages; but a force equal to the lifting and placing of every one of its huge blocks of stone is "generated"—according to the estimate of a distinguished American engineer, Mr. George S. Morison—"in a modern steamship in a single voyage across the Atlantic." One man, through modern knowledge, is able—shall we say, to do the work of thousands? Rather let us say that one man, through modern knowledge, is able to direct the energies of nature for the doing of the world's work, to an extent that is practically limitless. The word of prophecy has found a physical fulfillment: the feeble among us are become as David, and the house of David "as the angel of Jehovah."⁹

What must be the effect? Greatly to change both the opportunities and the methods of business, government, education, moral reformation, Chris-

⁹Zech. xii. 8. George S. Morison. "The New Epoch." p. 5 ff.

tian evangelism, all broad human intercourse and coöperation—every change meaning greater efficiency—unto the ends of the earth. For the physical discoveries and inventions, with their command of power, will go everywhere; so that national isolation has even now become impossible, and the savage and barbarous modes of living must cease to be.

If, as seems likely, we are only at the beginning of this human mastery of the measureless natural powers, the later and the final results are far beyond the reach of any imagination. But the question arises, May not these results be evil rather than good, or at least evil as much as good? may they not tend to degeneration rather than real up-building, and thus determine men, while gaining the whole world, to lose themselves?

It is altogether possible. Increase of self-indulgence, oppression of the poor, worldliness, gross materialism, may be the attendants of increasing material productiveness. But similar things are true of all the great gifts with which God has been pleased to intrust the race. Fire may be used to torture an enemy or burn down a city; letters may take the form of corrupting literature; Christianity itself may be abused into an occasion of idolatries, persecutions, unholy ambitions, and bloody wars. Yet from age to age God, giving larger and larger gifts to men, lays upon them the responsibility of power, as they are able to bear

it; and the general outcome is the growth and the good of mankind.

Where, then, is our faith in the living God? Who has forbidden the Church to continue to sing, with heart unforced and jubilant, the psalm of "Hope thou in God"—even in him who, immanent in nature and in the individual soul, is no less truly immanent in human history? Shall not the stupendous command of natural forces which men are now wielding, and which, certain not to diminish, promises enormously to increase, while fearfully abused, as it surely will be—shall it not become, under the unseen guiding Hand, more and more a means of the highest good of the world? Shall it not make for international good will, for the banishing of ignorance and prejudice, for large-heartedness and peace, for the brotherhood of man? Are there no precedents to show that it will prepare the way of the Lord in the coming of his kingdom?

Certain earnest and sensitive spirits, let it be granted, cannot share this or any other cheerful interpretation of the signs of the times. They are overborne by the present distress. They see that which is dark and forbidding rather than the light of a far-reaching purpose brightening unto the perfect day. They know that sin abounds, but find it hard to believe that grace does much more abound. They see the black and awful sky, not the celestial power and glory which it hides. In

some instances, their mouths are overfull of eulogy of "the good old times" (which never were) and of lamentation over the present degeneracy. The more hopeful outlook seems to them little truer than desire dreamily mistaken for expectation.

The king's reply to his prime minister is the answer to all such complaints. When the minister was loudly deploring the corruption in morals and manners that marked his times, "I have no doubt of it," said the king, "for my father has told me that his grandfather said that it was just so in his day." Given to neither optimism nor pessimism (which are both matters of temperament rather than of reason or faith), the clear-eyed interpreter of history offers no continuous lament over "the tender grace of a day that is dead," but a calm and joyful assurance that "the best is yet to be." "Some of us," says Dr. F. B. Meyer, "used to think that the twilight in which we were living was the twilight of growing darkness—that the world was getting worse. . . . We have now learned to understand that the twilight is the twilight between the night and the day."

The reason and the heart that repose not upon Fate, but upon the living God, will believe indeed in the reality of that which is, but equally in the potentiality of that which *ought to be*.

True, there are grievous delays and interruptions, and many retrogressions. The world stream

zigzags in its course, stagnates into many a fever-stricken marsh, whirls backward in many an eddy along the shore; but the main current, as noted from age to age, is seen to keep the line of progress. Slow, as men, short-lived and short-sighted, count slowness, it still knows its direction. What, then, may be the end?

V

And now at the center of the world's life, the very heart of all its history, is the Church of God. It represents, as does no other society, ancient or modern, the reign of God in holy love on earth. It is the outward and institutional, though at the best extremely inadequate, expression of his kingdom. Its task is to exemplify that kingdom of heaven perfectly, and to make it thus not only visible but universal. Of all its thought and effort, of all its witnessing and warfare, of whatever sacrificial service it has rendered to men, this is the consummation.

A distinguished Christian scholar of our time has said that it is impossible to be enthusiastic about the Church of the present day. However this may be (and many of us cannot at all share the sentiment), there is no doubt that the experiences of the Church, along the path in which the hand of God has led it hitherto, have included divers prophetic signs of its promised perpetuity and power.

Trace its earlier history. During the period of little more than infantile weakness, in Egypt, in Canaan, in Babylon, Israel stood trembling more than once on what seemed to be the verge of destruction. Apparently her mission had well-nigh reached a disastrous end. But it was not so. Through death there rose up a new and larger life. Out of Egypt came Moses, the nation, the Law; out of the early fearful disorders of Canaan came David, the monarchy, the temple, the prophets; out of Babylon, the land of exile, came the study of the sacred Scriptures, and the restored worship of Jehovah nevermore to be tainted with idolatry—what has been called “the birth of the Church.” Again and again the unbelief of the faint-hearted was rebuked and the expectation of the men of faith justified.

Jehovah taught the secret of it all to his servants the prophets. It was simply that *his own word* and *his own hand* was in the Church’s history. When Moses, on that day of days in his shepherd life, led his flock to Mount Horeb and saw the bush all aflame yet unconsumed, he would draw near and discover if possible how such a thing could be. Then spake the Divine Voice, as it were out of the midst of the burning bush, I AM THAT I AM. It was the presence of the Eternal in the Church of Israel that kept her indestructible in the midst of all her protracted fiery trials, till his purpose should be accomplished.

When, at the beginning of the Restoration, Zerubbabel had undertaken to rebuild the long-demolished temple of Jehovah, there was sent him a true prophet with a message for the time. The difficulties of Zerubbabel's undertaking were immense. It was as if an impassable mountain had arisen to forbid all further progress. But the word of Zechariah was, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." The temple and its worship should be restored. The Church should enter upon an age of larger light, holding forth the Scriptures of truth, till He should come whose will it was to redeem and whose right it was to reign.

Not, however, because Zerubbabel was a prince and a patriot, planning wisely and executing with persistent diligence; and not because of his co-laborers, whoever these might be. The real ground of confidence lay infinitely deeper: "Not by might nor by power, but *by my Spirit*, saith Jehovah of hosts."¹⁰ The innermost secret of success was the unchangeable purpose and power of the Eternal.

When the God of heaven would reveal this same secret to the prophet Daniel, in the capital of the Chaldean Empire, he showed him the vision of the little stone which broke in pieces the huge composite image, and growing into a vast mountain filled the whole earth, and as to its own origin was *cut out without hands*.¹¹ There is the central and

¹⁰Zech. iv. 6, 7. ¹¹Dan. ii. 34, 35, 45.

vivifying truth of all philosophy of history. It is no less, and could be no more, than the purposeful work of "Him who is invisible."

The whole civilized world, it would seem, was never more heartless and hopeless than during the years immediately preceding the Christian era. The ancient civilizations had fallen to pieces. Rome had absorbed everything, and was now, in her wealth and wickedness, making life a bitterness and a despair. The ancient pagan faiths were decadent. They had lost their primal power upon the minds of men. Philosophy, at best the possession of a small select circle, did not satisfy the needs of the spirit. Animalism, atheism, slavery, bloodshed, excess of riot, loss of the higher ideals, weariness and disgust, were the moral characteristics of the age. The world seemed old, outworn, purposeless. It was a dreadful time.

In Judea the dry rot of formalism had eaten away the heart of piety. There was the temple with its offerings, and the synagogues with their schools and prayers and Scripture readings and homilies; and there were a few faithful souls, as always, with their faces toward God and the morning,

Who saw the bright beams of the coming day
Far through the blackness of th' enshrouding night.

But prominently and generally religion had become a performance. The Law was made of no effect by puerile and tyrannous traditions. For

hundreds of years no prophet had arisen with an immediate message from Jehovah, to clear the moral atmosphere and open anew the springs of truth.

But it was amidst this very darkness that the Light of the World dawned in splendor. In this dreary and unpromising age came the Supreme Good. Seeking not his own, the Man of Calvary gave his life that men might have life very abundantly. The Church of the New Covenant began to be builded. Men went forth to tell with tongues of fire the word of the Cross and the Resurrection. God was found as a Father and Redeemer reconciled in Jesus Christ. A new world of spiritual facts, ideas, and forces, of the freedom of sonship and brotherhood in the Son of God, was created. It is our own present and familiar heritage.

And now when the Fulfiller of both law and prophecy, the sinless Christ, having come as it was written of him, declares that against the Church which he will build the gates of death shall not prevail, that from the cross he will be drawing all men unto himself, that he is still the Coming One and will reign in the undisputed glory of his kingdom—it is both a reasoned belief and the trust of the heart that responds, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

VI

From the outset of this ecclesiological study, it has seemed quite clear that the only business of

the Church, its one reason to be, is to promote the coming of the heavenly Father's kingdom, which is the doing of his will, on earth. Upon these last pages let the thought be, What is the coming of the kingdom?

First and essentially it is personal salvation. The kingdom of God enters the heart as invisibly as does the spirit of Truth—which, indeed, is another name by which it might be called. To be born of the Spirit, that is to know the kingdom of God. One by one are its subjects gained. The same infallible Teacher, who bade his disciples pray for the universal doing of the will of the Father who is in heaven, likened the kingdom of God to a "pearl of great price" which a man must buy for himself at the cost of all that he has.

The Church, therefore, must do the work of an evangelist; and every real hearer of the real gospel is either saved or condemned.

But in immediate connection with this doctrine of personal salvation is the social idea, which is not only contained in the very word *kingdom* but is everywhere present in the Gospels. It is that of fraternity, spiritual fellow-citizenship, as this expresses itself in the Christian congregation.

Then, there is another sense in which Jesus speaks of the coming of the kingdom. He speaks of it prophetically as a distinct historical event (*ἡ παρουσία*)—namely, as the displacement of the earlier form of the Kingdom by the later and lar-

ger, the Church of Israel by the Christian Ecclesia.

For it was of the future that he spoke when he declared, "I will build my Church." When? At the time of the declaration of this great purpose, Jesus was nearing the cross. When should he gather, on the rock of professing discipleship, his Congregation? Not until he should be made known as Lord and Saviour in the Resurrection. Then, introducing this new era in the spiritual order of the world, would be given the fullness of the interpreting and sanctifying Spirit. Upon this would follow the apostolic preaching with its unprecedented signs of power; the gathering of Christian congregations in Israel and afar in the Gentile world; and Israel's judgment day. This coming of the Son of Man in the building of his Church was a manifest coming of the kingdom of God. "There be some of them that stand here who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."¹²

Is it not also in accord with the spirit of the New Testament to speak of any notable spiritual awakening or advance of Christianity, in similar language? The triumph of the early evangelism in the rise of the Catholic Church, the Protestant Reformation, the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, a revival in any Christian community at any time in which all men are

¹²Matt. xvi. 28. Cf. Matt. x. 23.

made to feel somewhat of the power of God unto salvation—such larger movements of “the powers of the age to come,” whether noted or unknown, are special fulfillments of the prayer for the coming of the Father’s kingdom.

But the end is not yet. All people are to receive that law of the Lord which is perfect, converting the soul. Are any elect? It is an election to others’ service. Is the whole world to be civilized? It is also to be evangelized. Are the kingdoms of knowledge and civil freedom and industrial achievement to come universally? So likewise is the kingdom of Christ.

O King of earth, the Cross ascend!

O’er climes and ages ’tis thy throne.

The truth of self-renouncing love in its supreme Example, even that of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, this Truth of truths, this Divine sacrificial love, will prevail.

VII

It is a process of growth, through successive stages, unto an abundant fruitage. Looking at a handful of wheat with an instructed eye, one may see the loaded wains bearing the harvest home. But not to-day nor to-morrow will the vision be realized. When the green blades begin to appear, one knows not how, above the darkness of the soil, there is a fulfillment of the prophecy in the seed;

when the ear is forming on the strongly built stalk, there is a larger fulfillment; when the ripened grain fills the ear, there is the fulfillment of the whole unfolding prophecy.¹³ Thus, in our Lord's parable of the Seed Growing Secretly, do we read the history of God's kingdom, not only in the hidden power that makes it what it is, but also in its orderly progress and manifestation. "The earth beareth fruit of herself; first, the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

But this is not all. The story of the grain field is not wholly a story of growth and ripening. When, all over the field, the perfected wheat is in the ear, there is an ending which is at the same time the beginning of a new and extremely different life history. Behold now the reaper with his scythe. "When the fruit is ripe straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come." So likewise with the kingdom of God. After the æon of growth and ripening, another appearing of the Son of Man to introduce the æon that is still to come. "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels."¹⁴

As in Israel there was growth in knowledge and

¹³Mark iv. 26-29.

¹⁴Matt. xiii. 39. Cf. passages in which Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God is an inner personal possession (Matt. vi. 33; xiii. 44; Mark x. 15; xii. 34; Luke xvii. 20, 21) with those in which he speaks of it as extending gradually throughout the world (Matt. xiii. 31, 32; xxiv. 14; xxvi. 13; Mark iv. 26-29), and

faith, through the progressive Divine self-revelation and redeeming activity, and then, in the fullness of time, the Incarnation of the Son of God, so in the Church of the New Covenant, there is to be growth, enlargement, progress, through the millenniums, and then, again in the fullness of time, another and still more manifest coming of the Son of God in the power and glory of his kingdom.

What shall be the particular manner of this final appearing of Jesus Christ has not been given us to know. It is in apocalyptic imagery that the great reality is foreshown. Let the event interpret the prophecy. Let the Day declare it.

It was so at his first coming. Israel's expectation was disappointed in the letter but crowned with honor in the spirit. Not even the deepest-seeing prophet or the best-instructed disciple, an Isaiah or a Simon Peter, could know the mystery of atoning love till it should be declared by the cross itself and the Risen One. So likewise will his second coming, when the nations shall bring their glory and honor into the heaven-descended City, be declared in its time.

It will be a coming in judgment. "As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world." It will be a coming in the completed glory of re-

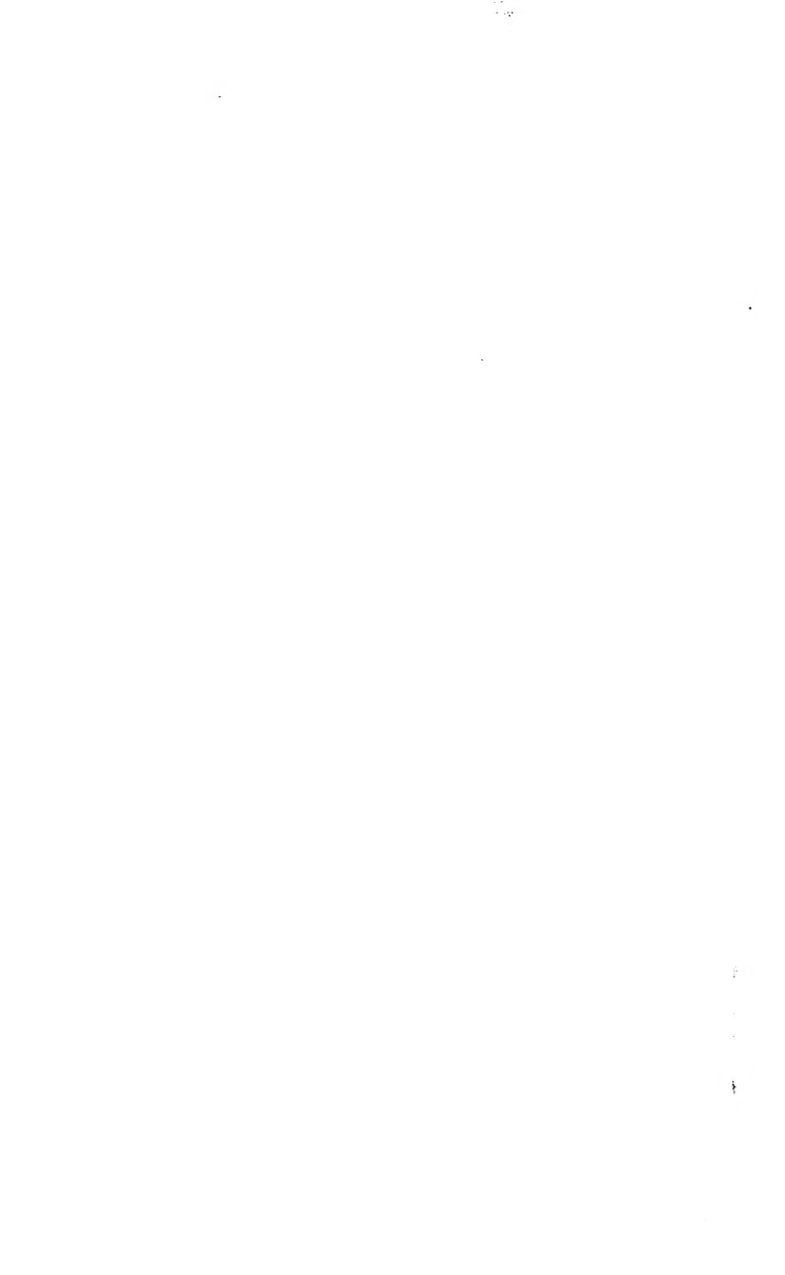
those in which he sets forth his advent for judgment at the end of the age (Matt. xiii. 41-43; xxv. 31-46, 29-31).

demption. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."¹⁵

We know that the consummation shall be infinitely more than worthy of all the witnessing and work of the Church in all the lives that have been freely poured out in its service. It will satisfy the Divine sacrificial and ministering love. It will be worthy of the eternal purpose of truth and grace in Jesus Christ.

Shall we hear a concluding word of the New Testament revelation, in the prophetic vision of the Holy City? "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." There is music and singing—"the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and they sing as it were a new song"; for these are symbols of the overbrimming joy of harmony with eternal law and love. But no holiest place, no temple, no mediation of ordinances. For the children of the King, each and all, behold his face in righteousness, the Kingdom imperfectly represented heretofore is now realized in glory, and—the idea of the Church is fulfilled.

¹⁵Matt. xiii. 40, 43.



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